The Matter of Time: Stories from a Living Present

by

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ABSTRACT

The living present is the instantaneous contraction of the past and anticipation of an unknowable future. As a method of understanding, the living present employs the claim that "we live as time makers—anything exists as a maker of time," in order to reveal the power that our stories, memories, predictions, and problems hold in making the time (and world) around us.[1] The value of such a project is its potential to disrupt the linear and causal stories that we tell about history, as well as to disrupt the anticipatory regime that often holds us hostage to a looming future. Even more importantly, the living present is a frame through which to view the interrelatedness of human and non-human entities organic and inorganic matter, and even material and immaterial interactions as they collaboratively make the past, present, and future.

To make a case for the living present as a method of understanding, I use a diffractive method to follow the ripples, overlaps, and differences between various topics as they are taken up in an interdisciplinary arena.[2] Chapter one develops the central argument of this dissertation through a detailed literary (via Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods*) and philosophical (via Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*) explication of the living present. Following this explanation, I apply the living present to three different timescapes in chapters two, three, and four, moving from the temporality of a singular concept (misogyny) to the temporality of identity construction (via queer time), and finally to the temporality of an era that is "not yet" but all around us (the Anthropocene). In each of these I highlight the impact of the "old" on the present,

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[1] James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 37.
[2] Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007).

or the past on the new. “The Time of Misogyny” conducts a close reading of Kate Manne’s *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* in order to demonstrate how an old concept such as misogyny can act as a tipping point for renewed engagement with violence against women in contemporary gender politics and activism. As well, I stretch the term misogyny to show that it is as much about race, culture, and sexuality as it is about gender, and that our response must also be intersectional.

In chapter three I explore another old concept, or rather the event of *coming out* as an affective temporal frame for queer subject creation. My key addition to this field is the notion of the time-body, or rather, the addition of a thick materiality to the otherwise fluid and ever-changing queer subject. I thus demonstrate the way that a living present enables us to understand *queer time* as not only a multiplicity of non-linear timelines, but as an embodied process of making a subject that is always a seamless flip between univocity and *differenciation,* sameness and difference.

In a third timescape, chapter four reads the living present alongside current discussions of the Anthropocene and the related anticipatory academic discourse about climate change. Departing from previous chapters, which centre on the *human* experience, chapter four explores the non-human, inorganic, and immaterial agencies of the living present, including how these have force and presence in the same ways as their counterparts. The lack of progress-oriented politics that is central to the living present, is a continual reminder that we are always “in the middle of things.” There will be no end to climate change just as there was no beginning, and what really matters is our ability to better understand our complex and multiple present accountabilities within an otherwise incomprehensible process of change.

The concluding comments ground this work in a thick, durational, understanding of time, especially our own temporal forces as “time-makers.” I argue that when we take heed of the fact that we live, act, and are acted upon within a living present which is always contracting the past as it reaches toward an unknowable future, we can unsettle the fierce linearity of our stories about history, particularly as they impact our political movements, theories, and daily choices. Through interdisciplinary and community-based examples, I demonstrate that by “thickening” the present moment to include multiple pasts (and multiple futures) we are invited to act with a deepened level of accountability to all possible timelines.

PREFACE: THE MONOMYTH

The monomyth, also called the hero's journey, is a common story arc that traces a character's call to adventure. Setting out on their own, our swashbuckling hero lets go of the world that they know—*Harry Potter's cupboard bedroom on Privet Drive; Katniss Everdeen's home in District 12; Frodo's comfortable existence in the Shire*—crosses a threshold of crisis, great challenge or adversity—*Harry faces off against Quirrell over the philosopher's stone; Katniss defeats the Hunger Games by threatening suicide; Frodo faces off against Gollum*—which they defeat in order to return home forever changed—*Harry returns home, but has a newfound inner strength as a wizard; Katniss returns to District 12 an unlikely champion; Luke is awarded for his efforts; and Frodo leaves middle earth to live with the Grey Elves.* The monomyth makes up nearly half of our Hollywood blockbusters, hundreds of thousands of books (fiction and non-fiction), and is often the retroactive frame through which we tell stories about ourselves. *I tell a story of being bullied in grade two, and after receiving support and guidance from my brave and emboldened uncle to stand up to my bullies (the mentor, also a key component of the hero's journey), I am able to stand up for myself.*

The monomyth also has societal and cultural force as it guides our Nationalist doctrines, our queer activisms, and even our relationship struggles. Therapists use it as a frame through which to push clients toward self-discovery; Trump uses it to justify global calls to war. The monomyth, like other storytelling apparatuses, frames and creates the world around us, and in so doing it actually *makes time*, particularly the sort of time that literary author Jeanette Winterson describes as a lie: *time as a straight line, time as a singular present, time as a known history and*

an unknown future.[3] When we think of storytelling we think of tall tales, myths, fabrications, and fables. But what if all stories are time-tellers, time-makers, history producers, future creators? Every storytelling trope has material uptake as it frames the past, future, and present in different ways. Sometimes these frames are irregular, multiple, and complex, and sometimes (more often) they are linear, progressive, and cumulative. In each tale, we take a journey to an elsewhere, and in so doing, we construct a present as a somewhere.

Stories are not just our access points into the worlds of fantastic beasts and imagined lands, because everything we write or speak is a form of storytelling, whether philosophy, science, cultural anthropology, or narrative. This means that all of our processes of writing and telling play a role in the making of time. This is a central component of the work ahead: the fact that we all tell stories and in so doing, *make time.* In claiming that we are time makers I mean simply that there is no outside of time. There is no grand clock that marks the passage of days; there is rather a relational passage by way of complicated entanglements of time, meaning, and mattering. Likewise, there is no outside of the story, our worlds are only and always the weaving together of the variety of memories, experiences, and anticipations that make up our own storied embodiments. We tell these stories as linear, but they are actually living presents: thick temporal stretches forward and backward that bring meaning, possibility, and hope to the present experience.

As the storyteller, I have the privilege of being able to pick and choose from thousands of different stories that have been told over time—stories about the "waves" of feminist theory, about the timelines of ancient Greece, about misogyny as a limited and complex term, about

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[3] Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry* (Toronto: Vintage Canada, 1989).

queer theory and new feminist materialisms, and about Indigenous temporalities. I also get to tell stories about Sara Ahmed, Claire Colebrook, Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, climate change, how I learned to ride a bike, the love lives of homo sapiens and robo sapiens, the Living Present, *and on and on and on*. But the stories that I tell are only and ever the product of my own entangled experiences as a complex body in an even more complex world. Some of this complexity includes my embodiment as a white settler, who is a cisgender, queer woman. I grew up in a progressive Mennonite family with divorced parents and conservative cousins. I was already a feminist in elementary school, and never brave enough to think my crushes on girls meant anything more than curiosity. I learned how to bake bread from run-away Hutterites, spent twelve years in University talking, teaching, and writing about queer theory, and then became the Executive Director of OUTSaskatoon, a queer community centre, where I have lived and breathed queer *praxis* for the last five years. At the same time, I have changed paths hundreds of times within this seemingly linear tale. I have loved and been broken, I have failed at relationships and sports, and succeeded at leadership and budgets. I dropped out of University, I tried to drop out of high school, I worked with nationally-renowned Indigenous scholars at a community-based research centre for seven years, I lived on a farm where I had to blow-dry newborn calves, I experienced great trauma as a young woman, and I was failed by a court system that is forever too cowardly to hold men accountable for their crimes. Each of these experiences have co-created the chapters and conversations that lie ahead. Every choice that I have ever made has ruptured a linear tale, linearities that are only ever retroactive attempts to make "reality" into truth and to turn ruptures into finitudes.

Just as I tell the stories of my life, I make cuts and slices, comparisons and critiques, in the work that lies ahead. This is the power of the storyteller, and as the storyteller, I have attempted

to make the power dynamics of these cuts transparent, but it is impossible to attend to every cut and such a quest toward transparency betrays the fact that there is no other way to speak, write, act, or *be in the world*, outside of our *tellings* of self, time, being, desiring. As such, my method is less a quest toward transparency as it is an honesty about the closeness between author and text. In the work that follows you will hear the *I,* you will get to know *me* as you traverse the pages, as you read story after story about philosophers, political crises, community narratives, and theoretical arguments. You will hear my opinions, memories, stories, and thoughts alongside these arguments, and sometimes they will be woven together as one. Does this mean that the work is autobiographical? *Of course it is autobiographical. Has there ever been anything else?* Whether it is a *Treatise on Human Nature*, an exploration of the *Logic of Sense*, or a novel about *Sexing the Cherry*, the author is always entangled with their text. The story is always a product of what matters to its teller at any given time for our storied pasts are always the first acts of present behavior, just as a collection of texts always forms the evidence for an argument. And so, the closeness to the "I" that characterizes this dissertation both makes visible the closeness that is always already there in our storytelling as much as our history-making and philosophizing. This transparency serves as a methodological tactic as it enacts the entanglement between bodies, ideas, memories, and skin that makes the timescape of a living present possible.

I also try to resist the monomyth in the work that follows, but I know how hard it is to deny the allure of the happy ending so I won't always be able to resist. You may try to think about a world where as I write, I work towards unravelling our familiar monomyths, questioning temporal singularities, and thickening our lone heroes. You may imagine Harry Potter the Muggle who had an entirely unremarkable life, or little Rue from the Hunger Games, who was the gentlest hero that Panem ever had. These stories may not be packed with the action that we

are used to, but they illustrate the ways that every *new* story is a line of flight: a creative burst from the original tale which connects with possibilities outside itself.[4] So, my reader, I invite you to imagine time otherwise, to embody a living present where time is multiple and the future has already passed. *I invite you to "close your eyes and dream. This is one story. There will be another."*[5]

This is an original work by Rachel Loewen Walker, though parts of this dissertation include adaptations of previously published material. Both the introduction and chapter one includes material that has been published in Rachel Loewen Walker, "The Living Present as a Materialist Feminist Temporality," *Woman: A Cultural Review* 25, no. 1 (2014): 46-61. Chapter four includes material that has been published in: Rachel Loewen Walker, "Environment Imagining Otherwise," *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (2013): 34-37.

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[4] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, trans. Brian Massumi (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 225–28.
[5] Jeanette Winterson, *The Stone Gods* (Boston: Mariner Books, 2009), 93.

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In a ten-year journey that is about the entanglement of bodies and theories in the making of time, I find myself wanting to thank hundreds, thousands of co-conspirators who have intervened along the way. I have had many communities of practice throughout my tenure as a PhD student, including most notably my University of Alberta colleagues, especially the members of the Deleuze and feminist reading groups who always brought text to life, life to text. I am also grateful to my community of support at OUTSaskatoon as the incredible staff and board wrapped their arms around me while I precariously balanced leadership responsibilities and writing deadlines throughout the last year and a half. And of course, thank you to the community that started it all, the students and faculty of the Women's and Gender Studies program at the University of Saskatchewan. Particularly Joan Borsa and Marie Lovrod, my mentors, colleagues, and friends, thank you for decades of support backward and forward.

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Lies 1: There is only the present and nothing to remember.

Lies 2: Time is a straight line.

Lies 3: The difference between the past and the future is that one has happened while the other has not.

Lies 4: We can only be in one place at a time.

Lies 5: Any proposition that contains the word 'finite' (the world, the universe, experience, ourselves...)

Lies 6: Reality as something which can be agreed upon.

Lies 7: Reality is truth.

Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*

INTRODUCTION

TELLING TIME

We live as time makers – anything exists as a maker of time.

—James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time*

Travel back to your seven-year-old self. Do you remember playing outside in the yard for three hours without stopping, waiting for your parents to get home from work, counting down the days until Christmas holidays? There was a sense in which the months dragged on forever; waiting an hour for something was excruciating, a year felt like a lifetime. Often my young self couldn't even think back far enough to the previous year, much less comprehend any continuity between that six-year old starting first grade and the seven-year-old heading in to second. William James believed that children and youth "felt" time much slower because of the fact that so many upcoming experiences were brand new[1]—do you remember the first time you rode a bike? *Yes, of course*. Do you remember the second? The tenth? Scientists have taken up a similar cause, looking at subjective experiences of time relative to the age of the subject and studies have shown that there is a correlation between age and the perception of time's speed. As we age, we experience time as moving faster which seems to align with my inability to determine

[1] William James, *The Principles of Psychology* (New York: Holt and Company, 1890).

whether an (otherwise memorable) event happened last year or the year before, compared to my precise, and still agonizing memory of cheating on a spelling test in November of my eighth year.[2]

Scientists aren't as concerned with the relationship between our subjective experience of time and its role in memory production as philosophers might be, but if we think about our growing seven-year-old, experiencing many things for the first time—whether riding a bike, taking a math test, going on a family vacation, having a fight with her best friend—by the time she reaches fifteen years, she's traveled through each of these experiences many times, some thousands of times, and each repeated experience adds another layer of understanding. The uniqueness fades, the body habitually moves through the movements of pedals and breaks, and the fights with friends layer a thicker skin upon a previously open heart. It is not only the case that the memories no longer take up as much space in our great mental stores, but also that the reflexive movement between past, present, and future becomes our modus operandi as we build our unique multi-layered pasts.

It is this contraction of time that lies at the heart of this project. Whether ordinary and mundane contractions of time and understanding such as the hand reaching for a boiling kettle, just moments before it squeals, or the profound contractions of memory such as adult fingers that unconsciously type out a phone number from childhood. I borrow the concept of "contraction" from Gilles Deleuze, who uses it alongside his description of the living present to refer to the present's envelopment of the past in all present experiences or understandings.[3] To contract is to

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[2] See Richard A. Block et al., "Human Aging and Duration Judgments: A Meta-Analytic Review," *Psychology and Aging* 13, no. 4 (1998): 584–596; Marc Wittmann and Sandra Lehnhoff, "Age Effects in Perception of Time," *Psychological Reports* 97, no. 3 (2005): 921–35.
[3] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 70.

expand a single experience into every smell, touch, or sound that came before it. For me, contraction is thirty-seven years of habit and memory housed on the head of a pin. More will be made of this concept in chapter one, where it operationalizes Deleuze's second synthesis of time (the pure past), but for now, and throughout this dissertation, I draw on a definition of contraction as both an expansion and a narrowing (or even an abridging) of the past in order that one's present understanding and comportment be comprised of a whole lifetime of experience and memories. Such instantaneous access is not granted through consciousness—as Tano Posterero writes, "to contract is neither to reflect nor to remember"[4]—but through an embodied entanglement with bodies, streets, smells, and other experiences. We can imagine this process as the compression of an accordion or the stretching of a child's Slinky™ toy; to contract the past is to experience the growth and the shrinking of each of these objects as they are pushed and pulled and to recognize that as distinct from reflection, the contraction is "the very constitution of time as such."[5] As an example of this contraction at work, I think back to the morning I was walking along a quiet street and recognized a childhood friend from behind. I had not seen this friend in twenty years, in which time we had both aged from adolescence to adulthood, and yet, I knew them immediately; an unconscious memory of movement, rhythm, and gait that I had somehow stored away. I contracted a long past in an instant and in that moment my timeline both narrowed and stretched.

Such instinctive knowledge speaks to all range of things including how we communicate with a stranger, or why we prefer one grocery store to another. Each of these moments is born out of the instantaneous contractions of past, present, and future that we conduct unconsciously

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[4] Tano Posteraro, "Organismic Temporality: Deleuze's Larval Subject and the Question of Bodily Time," *Symposium* 19, no. 2 (2015): 190.
[5] Posteraro, 190.

and which demonstrate the imperceptible ways that we travel through time in any given moment. Consequently, it bears mentioning that the project at hand is not about time's minutes, days, months, or hours, nor is it about whether time is real, abstract, relational, or substantive (although I explore each of these stories about time). This project is about time's architecture, its materiality, thickness, productivity, and action. Time is less an abstract, intangible concept, then it is the deep well of experience and understanding that frames and produces all matters of encounter in very grounded and embodied ways. If I think back to riding a bike at age seven, I cannot extract the memory from my parent's divorce for it is the only time I remember them together. The memories tumble together and bring with them feelings of sorrow and nostalgia, while at the same time stretching around thirty years of life lived with parents apart, step-siblings, new bikes, different houses. This act of contraction participates in what could be called a *thick time,* or a "transcorporeal stretching between present, future, and past."[6] Rather than thinking of time as the unspooling of a horizontal chronology, with the familiar tick marks tracking significant events, a thick time takes a vertical slice from within the middle of a horizontal timeline. For example, figure 1 shows thick time as a deep dive into a particular moment; it brings into relief all significant pasts that have contributed to such a moment, and rather than narrating a causal chronology (this happened, and then this happened, and therefore and so on) the pasts, presents, and futures are stacked. They bleed in and through one another as

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[6] Astrida Neimanis and Rachel Loewen Walker, "Weathering: Climate Change and the 'Thick Time' of Transcorporeality," *Hypatia* 29, no. 3 (2014): 561.

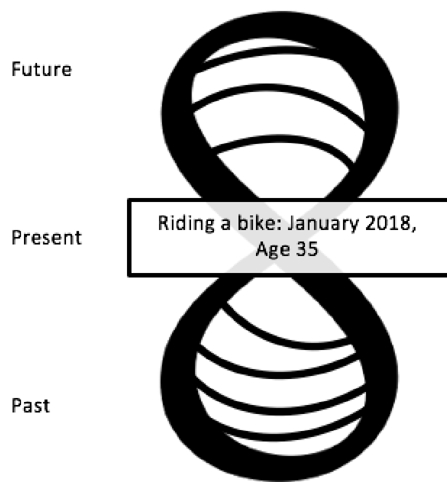

Figure 1: Thick Time

they are brought to bear on a thickened present experience or what we may call the *living present.*

The Living Present comes to us from Gilles Deleuze in *Difference and Repetition* (1994) and *The Logic of Sense* (1969). Succinctly, it describes the present moment as a passive contraction of the past and an anticipation of the future in its creation of meaning and understanding; or the way in which the seven-year-old learning to ride a bike draws upon the previous day's lesson as she pushes one foot down on the pedal and struggles to make the other follow suit. Our bike rider has learned this rhythm already, and so it is familiar, it starts to become a habit. At the same time she knows that she cannot stop mid-pedal because she stretches toward a future where she moves along the path smoothly, continuously. Or likewise, there is a future where she jolts along and then crashes to the sidewalk following a forgotten movement *(a habit not yet formed)*. Note, however, that the living present is not merely a "drawing on the past" and "anticipation of the future" so that the present action has meaning, but rather it actually *changes* past and future of self and other through continuous, reverberating waves.

Drawing on this, Deleuze describes *selfhood* as the composition of thousands of habits, the "contractions, contemplations, pretensions, presumptions, satisfactions, fatigues" that make up "variable presents."[7] In fact, it is the very function of habitual processes (where habit is a repetition of difference) that constitutes a self at all, and importantly for Deleuze, this self-making-past-making-future is ever-changing: "The self does not undergo modifications, it is itself a modification."[8] Similarly, and perhaps more lucidly, James Williams explains this through an example of a drumstick hitting a drum, covered with deposits of coloured sand: "one side is the past and another the future, each shaking and forming different shapes as the drumsticks hit towards the centre."[9] The drumstick is a time traveler as it stretches and contracts through multiple temporalities, and more importantly, it is itself changed through every beat just as our young bike rider changes with every successful or failed attempt.

The living present is just the first of three Deleuzian syntheses of time, each of which serves as a unique contraction of past, present, and future. The second is the pure past (or memory), which operates on the present in order to make the present *pass*, while the third provides the possibility for the new, or an undetermined future through the "cut" or caesura. The three syntheses operate simultaneously, and will all inform the project ahead, but our largest stake in this project is with the first synthesis: the living present, as a novel method for understanding how *time* is given life through the activities of remembering, storytelling, predicting and anticipating. Most significantly, the living present demonstrates that there is no time-as-container within which we *have* experience, rather we are ourselves created and in turn

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[7] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 78.
[8] Deleuze, 79.
[9] Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, 11.

create the world through these temporal processes, through living through experiences. Importantly for Deleuze (and for reasons that will be made clear in chapter one), these processes are *passive*; they occur without conscious or agential human action. A passive temporal process means that rather than understanding time as a series of selective, conscious, or active associations, wherein our conscious selves peel back through the rolodex of memory to pull out the bluest or shiniest card, our memories and predictions are largely unconscious *(we may say to our rolodex: "show me a plumber" and it spits out the smells of our childhood basement flooding during an historic rainstorm)*. Our memories, in this model, are governed as much by our bodies *(the fingers that instinctively know how to translate words to keys to screen)* and environments *(the pink bar of soap that recalls my grandmother's bathroom sink from thirty years past)* as they are by our consciousness.

Even more significant is that the living present extends well beyond mere "human" activity. In the sense that human beings live as time makers, continually contracting and re-making past and present, so too does the tree outside my window. In a Canadian climate, a poplar tree has a concentric ring of growth for each year gone by. We can read these rings like a map of the tree's past: how much water did the tree get? How cold was that winter four years ago? On the other hand, a tree in Costa Rica, where the seasons don't change on an annual clock, may develop a range of rings in the course of a year, depending on the changing climate. Both trees are material manifestations of thick time, and yet they are unique and incompatible maps. Further, their maps are dynamic: they are unpredictable and created in relation to the water, air, sunlight, or earth. This interconnectedness reminds us that we are fundamentally relational beings. There is nothing that we experience, understand, or know, that is not the product of our engagement with another, *an other*. Whether it is another human being, our pets, a red banana-

seat bicycle, or an old, cracked, pink bar of soap, our memories are fiercely collaborative as they are shaped and cemented, changed, or forgotten in relation to all entities with which we are entangled (people, objects, cities, trees).

Take another example: for most of my adult life I remembered a time that my mother was in Hantleman psychiatric hospital at the Royal University Hospital in Saskatoon. She was there for three months and I remember visiting her often. We used to wander through the hospital hallways and explore different floors. She would introduce me to her friends in the rooms next to her and we would go to the common areas to listen to music or play games. I remember missing her terribly and willing her to get better soon so that she leave and we could walk along the river banks instead of hospital hallways, like we were used to doing. One day, a few years ago, my mom and I talked about the time she spent in the hospital when I was nine years old. I told her about all of the things I remembered and she looked at me wide-eyed and said: "Rachel, I was in the psych ward for thirteen days." *Thirteen days.* I didn't even believe her when she first told me. She further shared that I had only visited her three times during that period. My nine-year-old self had taken hold of that short time period and expanded it by nearly 600%. So significant were those hours of new experience in relation to my fears about my mom, and the brave new world of hospitals and mental health, that I drastically elongated the timeline.

This is the reach of the living present; it is a dynamic stretching back and reaching forward in order to make sense of our present selves. If we take a deep breath and really feel the impacts of such a limitless process of change and innovation, we can exhale and release long histories of reliance on fixed, linear timelines. For instance, the significant import of my memory failure described above is not that I remembered *wrongly*, nor that memory itself is suspect, as many have claimed throughout history. Instead, it is that *time moves*, it changes, grows,

transforms, and is itself transformed. And more curiously, it has material impact, as long before my mom corrected my memory, I took a job as a researcher for the Indigenous People's Health Research Centre, which was located in the Royal University Hospital. Incredibly, on the first day of work, when I wandered out of my office for lunch, I knew exactly where I was going. I remembered the corridors my mom and I travelled through, I found the obscurely located cafeteria, and even remembered the floor and wall colours of where my mom stayed. At the time, I attributed this muscle memory to the months I spent at RUH as a child, when in fact, I had compounded three short visits into a crystal-clear fifteen-year-deep recollection.

Today, I tell both memories, as though they sit alongside one another in alternative temporal universes. I am not after the truth of "how long" but rather interested in the impact of "what happened" and how it produced many offshoots of experience and understanding. Such a reframing of my childhood timeline enacts the Deleuzian attempt to imagine time that is "out of joint" or out of step.[10] Rather than subordinating time to its historic points or the movements that it is accustomed to measuring (hours, years, growth), time is "liberated from its overly circular figure, freed from the events which made up its content."[11] This challenges us to rethink the safety and security of being able to tell causal stories about the present: such that I may say that the hospital layout was emblazoned into my mind because I was traumatized as a youngster at having to visit my mother there. This makes sense. A therapist might draw out such a claim, and yet, it doesn't sit well with my present and it effectively closes off the potential to explore other avenues surrounding the force of memory or the ways that our minds stretch and contract in relation to new experiences or in response to trauma. As I will discuss at length in later chapters,

[10] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 88.
[11] Deleuze, 88.

causal stories are often hinged on progress narratives; they reach toward a supposed "improvement" or a normalized pattern of development. Though there is great value in a quest toward improvement (i.e. improving one's math skills so as to attain a job as a bookkeeper), my memories of my mother's time in the hospital have experiential force in my own present. They produced retroactive causality for my familiarity with the hospital walls. Circling back to "thick time" this memory, though short in "clock time" is thickened by its uniqueness. And as it operates within my own unique present, it embodies something of the "erotic effect of memory itself" as Deleuze describes it, dancing and weaving through my present self-making-past-making-future, and turning itself into a weighted story about my young self, my relationship with my mom.[12] The truth is, I learn much more about myself by looking at the experience through a frame of a living present, than I do from relying on an "accurate" timeline.

THEORIZING TIME

Along with the many other stories that I will share in the pages to come, these opening memories demonstrate that *time*—including its links to memory, repetition, future, past, and present—is utterly fascinating and endlessly mysterious. At the same time, explorations of time and temporality are nothing "new" as temporality has captivated writers, thinkers, scientists, and creators for centuries. I will dip into some of the centuries-old time telling (via Heraclitus, Aristotle, and Augustine) in the second half of this introduction, not in an effort to pay respect or ground the work in some Western philosophical tradition, but to demonstrate that our temporal presents are always contractions of specific histories of thought. I will also engage many

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[12] Deleuze, 88.

contemporary stories about time as they connect with the topics ahead. In the face of the breadth and span of such stories about time, some have stated that we are in a "temporal turn," but I am not sure this is accurate.[13] The entire corpus of Western philosophy betrays a fascination with time (and space), whether that fascination is with metaphysical or concrete time. I do acknowledge, however, that there has been a lot of storytelling going on as of late, whether through Melissa Gregg's critique of obsessive time-management in an age of more and more complicated notions of productivity, Mark Rifkin's critique of settler-time in a call for Indigenous temporal sovereignty, or even an exploration into the time of the university—that is, the speed of change and its impact on knowledge production, governance, and student and faculty experiences.[14] Of the many contemporary conversations around temporality that both inform and expand upon the project ahead, my work has found its greatest co-conspirators within scholarship that could be called queer theories of temporality, though this branch intersects with feminist, transnational, settler-colonial, and disability or "crip" theory, as well as the domains of metaphysics, ontology, and ethics.[15] Though these projects are vast, they enlist the familiar bent

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[13] See Robert Hassan, "Globalization and the 'Temporal Turn': Recent Trends and Issues in Time Studies," *The Korean Journal of Policy Studies* 25, no. 2 (2010): 83–102; Christine Ross, *The Past Is the Present, It's the Future Too: The Temporal Turn in Contemporary Art* (London: Bloomsbury Academic, 2012).

[14] Melissa Gregg, *Counterproductive: Time Management in the Knowledge Economy* (Duke University Press, 2018); Mark Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2017); Paul Gibbs et al., eds., *Universities in the Flux of Time: An Exploration of Time and Temporality in University Life* (New York & London: Routledge, 2014).

[15] For feminist works see: Elizabeth Grosz, *Space, Time, and Perversion: Essays on the Politics of Bodies* (New York: Routledge, 1995); Elizabeth Grosz, *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures* (Ithaca and London: Cornell University Press, 1999); Elizabeth Grosz, *Time Travels: Feminism, Nature, Power* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2005); Elizabeth Grosz, *Becoming Undone: Darwinian Reflections on Life, Politics, and Art* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011); Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010); J Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives* (New York: New York University Press, 2005); Claire Colebrook, "Stratigraphic Time, Women's Time," *Australian Feminist Studies* 24, no. 59 (2009): 11–16; For transnational texts see Cynthia Enloe, "Feminism, Nationalism, and Militarism: Wariness without Paralysis," in *Feminism, Nationalism, and Militarism* (Arlington, VA: Association for Feminist Anthropology/American Anthropological Association in collaboration with the International Women's Anthropology Conference, 1996), 42–54; Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007);

of queer theory to twist and to transgress in temporal explorations that stretch and disrupt the time-tellings with which we are more familiar. I will explore queer temporalities in more detail in chapter three, but they are also close at hand throughout this project. On account of years of undergraduate and graduate interest in queer theory and queer activism, these queer, feminist time-texts are my "familiars." They are the home toward which I am *turned* and the material explanation as to why I use some texts and not others (as anticipated by Ahmed's queer(ed) phenomenology of orientation described a few pages ahead).

Within the terrain of queer/feminist temporalities, there is a wide range of overlapping areas and so-termed "theories" of queer temporality, and in service to the living present, I will spend a few pages focusing on three of these: 1) novel engagements with history; 2) phenomenological explorations of bodies in time; and 3) critical engagements with futurity. Regarding the first, any effort to conduct novel engagements with history echoes the work of the living present in continually re-making the past through habitual repetition. There is no shortage of studies of gay and lesbian, or even queer history, as the project of revealing lives long hidden was a key component of early gay and lesbian studies. However, Heather Love's *Feeling*

Carolyn Dinshaw et al., "Theorizing Queer Temporalities: A Roundtable Discussion," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 13, no. 2–3 (2007): 177–95; For intersections with critical disability studies and "crip" theory see Rachel Loewen Walker, Danielle Peers, and Lindsay Eales, "New Constellations: Lived Diffractions of Dis/Ability and Dance," in *Feminist Philosophies of Life*, ed. Hasana Sharp and Chloe Taylor (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2016), 129–45; For anti-teleological projects see Lee Edelman, *No Future: Queer Theory and the Death Drive* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004); José Esteban Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York and London: NYU Press, 2009); Madhavi Menon, "Spurning Teleology in Venus and Adonis," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 11, no. 4 (2005): 491–519; Elizabeth Grosz, *The Nick of Time: Politics, Evolution, and the Untimely* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2004); For its crossovers with philosophy see Carla Freccero, *Queer/Early/Modern* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2005); Carla Freccero, "Queer Times," *South Atlantic Quarterly* 106, no. 3 (2007): 485–94; Shannon Winnubst, *Queering Freedom* (Indiana University Press, 2006); Shannon Winnubst, "Temporality in Queer Theory and Continental Philosophy," *Philosophy Compass* 5, no. 2 (2010): 136–46; Rachel Loewen Walker, "The Living Present as a Materialist Feminist Temporality," *Woman: A Cultural Review* 25, no. 1 (2014): 46–61; Sara Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2006); And for ethical projects see Neimanis and Loewen Walker, "Weathering: Climate Change and the 'Thick Time' of Transcorporeality"; Rosi Braidotti, *Transpositions: On Nomadic Ethics* (Cambridge: Polity, 2006).

Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History and Christopher Nealon's *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion Before Stonewall*, both engage in unique projects of changing the past and thus thickening the queer present. For example, Love pulls together literature such as *Summer Will Show* by Sylvia Townsend Warner and *The Well of Loneliness* by Radclyffe Hall to show that experiences of shame, depression, despair, and paranoia are often the forgotten stories within queer progress narratives. She calls these "backward" feelings as they serve as reminders of pasts that were never quite as rosy as the present. Rather than getting caught up in affirmative futures, Love compels us to look backward, paying attention to the ways that painful histories of being closeted, excluded, and invisible have far-reaching impact on the present. Like Love, Nealon travels the familiar path of re-reading old texts by gay and lesbian authors and drawing out the conflicting and often negative emotions within such texts. Nealon's storytelling extends to the emotional impact of the artefacts themselves, especially lesbian pulps and muscle magazines, including the ways that the veiled (and even imagined) references to homosexuality in such texts create a shared history that connects their readers across temporal fields. As Nealon writes we are "trained a little in hearing the call of homosexuality in analogies to secret, impossible affiliations" and so this training operates as the unconscious contraction of spoken and unspoken cultural cues that queer communities have long relied on to find community and recognition.[16]

Although phenomenology is not a strong touchstone for this dissertation, nor for Deleuze, the case that we are *time makers,* relies on an engagement with various types of human experience such as memory, perception, and desire, as well as our orientation toward things as a

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[16] Christopher Nealon, *Foundlings: Lesbian and Gay Historical Emotion Before Stonewall* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2001), 182.

process of *making* such things. Sketching a possible queer phenomenology, Sara Ahmed stretches the habit of queer phenomenologists to explore the everyday lived experiences of gay and lesbian people to one that offers a "phenomenological approach to what it means to 'orient' oneself sexually toward some others and not other others."[17] For Ahmed, our orientation toward things (people, objects, norms) is borne out of a pre-existing horizon in which some things are "reachable" and others are not. As it applies to sexual orientation, Ahmed queries the unquestioned link between *sexual* and *orientation*, such that we take for granted the identifying function of the pair, but not the spatializing function of being sexually oriented toward one and not another. By exploring a queer phenomenology, rather than a phenomenology of queer, Ahmed discusses the way that our sexual orientation (as we are oriented toward) shapes the spaces in which we are and likewise the timescapes within which we find ourselves.[18] Of interest to a Deleuzian living present, the object (i.e. tables, lesbian pulps, rainbow flags) plays a significant role in Ahmed's account of orientation, further thickening Nealon's recognition that the artefacts of our (queer) lives are heavy with memory and meaning, and this meaning makes up the material of our experience.

In terms of the third field of queer temporality, critical engagements with futurity take multiple modes. Whether it is the neoliberal literature that is wary of anticipation (and to which I turn in the last section of chapter one), the rejection of the future that Lee Edelman and Leo Bersani call for, or the tempered hopefulness that José Estoban Muñoz, Elizabeth Grosz, and Elizabeth Freeman explore, each of these conversations trouble our seeming obedience to the

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[17] Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*, 68.
[18] Ahmed, 68.

future via a range of dominant norms.[19] Instead, we are encouraged to question an orientation toward the future that doesn't interrogate the power that time has on our lives. In some ways, this wariness in the face of a legitimating future means that the future is wholly suspect, as Edelman finds it. Edelman describes the force of the future as distinctly tied to the figure of the Child: "The Child remains the perpetual horizon of every acknowledged politics, the fantasmatic beneficiary of every political intervention."[20] As the penultimate figure of purity and innocence in need of protection the child has the concomitant effect of rendering *queerness* as the side that does not fight for the future of the Child. Whether through the lack of queer reproduction or the absence of children from within queer politics, Edelman determines that queer subjects should refuse the child, along with hope and anticipation and instead embrace a queer negativity. This negativity circumvents the "reproductive futurity" that the child signifies and instead embraces a death drive or a politics that is not oriented toward a "better future."

In the less polemical camp, many queer theorists have cast the future as an open-ended terrain. Muñoz argues that Edelman's negativity comes from a place of privilege, where the sacred child of the future is always already white, while "racialized kids, queer kids, are not the sovereign princes of futurity."[21] Thus, Muñoz sweeps Edelman's anti-future bent aside in determining that queerness is a "not yet here" and instead a stretch toward an unknown utopia, or a project of collective temporal distortion. He invites us to "vacate the here and now for a then

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[19] For more political engagements see: Wendy Brown, *Politics Out of History* (Princeton University Press, 2001); Wendy Brown, *Undoing the Demos: Neoliberalism's Stealth Revolution* (New York: MIT Press, 2015); Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*; and Vincanne Adams, Michelle Murphy, and Adele E. Clarke, "Anticipation: Technoscience, Life, Affect, Temporality," *Subjectivity* 28, no. 1 (2009): 246–65. For others see Edelman, *No Future*; Leo Bersani, *Homos* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2009); Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*; Grosz, *Time Travels*; Grosz, *The Nick of Time*; Freeman, *Time Binds*.

[20] Edelman, *No Future*, 3.

[21] Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*, 95.

and there," which looks at imagining new and better pleasures and refusing to accept the present as all there is. [22]

As Muñoz makes no reference to queer and feminist work in this area, women, feminine, trans, and gender diverse subjects are also likely not the royal subjects of futurity, and so it is the feminist angles within queer temporalities that offer tempered "utopian" dreams of thinking the *new* (and generally with no utopia in mind). For Grosz, a new understanding of temporality begins, surprisingly, with Darwinian evolution. Darwin has long been a figure of discomfort for feminists, considering the role of evolutionary theory in justifying relations of domination and subordination between races and the sexes.[23] However, Grosz argues that Darwin actually offers a biting critique of such hierarchies, and that rather than supporting essentialist models of human nature, he provides an antihumanist understanding of biological dynamics. She writes "evolution is a fundamentally open-ended system which pushes toward a future with no real direction, no promise of any particular result, no guarantee of progress or improvement, but with every indication of inherent proliferation and transformation."[24] While Darwin's theory has been used by modernists and progressivists in the hopes that it will enable humanity to be perfected along a certain trajectory, Grosz understands the antiteleology inherent in Darwinian evolution to indicate that life is open-ended, and involved in natural/cultural/sexual/social modes of self-transformation that have direct relevance for feminist theory. Evolutionary theory, then, provides a picture of what temporality *is*; that is, the active force that enables objects to come into existence: "the ongoing condition of becoming that enables even the universe itself to become."[25]

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[22] Muñoz, 185.
[23] See Grosz, *Time Travels*, 14–18.
[24] Grosz, 26.
[25] Grosz, 181.

Grosz hinges her argument on incidences of chance, randomness, and accident to describe the way that "beings are impelled forward to a future that is unknowable, and relatively uncontained by the past," and such a framing has further impact on an ontology of becoming.[26] Within this ontology, subjects are not parachuted into a world, but rather are co-creatively made into subjects (we are time makers) and alternatively make the world into things, objects, and entities. This is a deepening of the phenomenological experience of being oriented *toward* an other (table, person, or text) that Ahmed speaks of above, but it is also a tipping point for the reciprocal *matter of time* in which such "things, objects, and entities" are also making us. For Grosz, such a project not only calls for a radical reworking of the way that we understand time (as a linear counting of moments), but it calls for feminists to take a step back from political, legal, and ethical concerns, which, although of great importance, don't enable feminists to see further than what lies before them. She writes:

> without broader and different concepts of the real, the ontological, and the relation between the problem and solutions, feminist theory is unable to invent or develop its own cosmologies, its own ontologies and epistemologies, and ultimately to regenerate or revitalize its political practices.[27]

Similarly, in the rich volume of queer temporality, *Queer Times, Queer Becomings*, McCallum and Tuhkanen demonstrate that through queer theory's reliance on the concept of *becoming*, it is always already *about time*: "With the notion of queerness strategically and critically posited not as an identity or a substantive mode of being but as a way of becoming, temporality is

[26] Grosz, 29.
[27] Grosz, 115.

necessarily already bound up in the queer."[28] In their introduction to the volume, McCallum and Tuhkanen liken this to the move from a time of *Chronos*, or linear time, to one of *Kairos*, which they determine as the "moment of opportunity,"[29]—or a sense of time that aligns with Grosz's argument for an open-ended and inventive future. For McCallum and Tuhkanen, as well as their contributors, the moment of opportunity includes nonlinear kinship patterns, shifting our habits so that they are more fluid, more flexible. For Grosz, the moment of opportunity is the limitless potential of open-ended evolution, rather than focusing on the causal before and after stories with which we are familiar.

In sketching these three branches of queer temporalities, I draw them together as expressions of the ways that the stories that we tell about time enact the work of drawing out our very histories. Novel stories about 1950s muscle magazines as part of the gay underground, thicken a present where gay magazines are now plentiful, but "hetero" muscle magazines serve as a nostalgic *underground*; queer phenomenology attunes us to the closeness between our lived sexualities and desires and our transgressive orientations toward them in the face of other, more forceful and expected orientations. Lastly, queer temporality's engagement with the future, whether from a Deleuzian lens (Grosz, McCallum and Tuhkanen) or otherwise (Edelman, Muñoz), is still affective beacons of disruption and change, processes which invite us as bodies and scholars to expand our levels of engagement and to be accountable to the stories that we weave for they are always the very "stuff" of our futures and our pasts.

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[28] E. L. McCallum and Mikko Tuhkanen, "Becoming Unbecoming: Untimely Mediations," in *Queer Times, Queer Becomings* (New York: State University of New York, 2011), 8.
[29] McCallum and Tuhkanen, 9.

A PATH FOR WHAT LIES AHEAD

With these many co-conspirators in hand, the primary aim of this dissertation is to develop a robust understanding of the living present as an apparatus of telling and understanding time and then to put this apparatus to work in demonstrating that time is the product of materialities, stories, connections, and concepts. As my tracing of queer temporalities has already shown, the living present is not an abstracted theory, but an indication of a transcorporeality, as Stacey Alaimo describes the concept. Rather than thinking of the human body as a distinct, autonomous entity, the concept of transcorporeality reveals that the human is "always intermeshed with the more-than-human world"; it is always "inseparable from 'the environment.'"[30] Engaged not only with a present of transcorporeality, we are also transcorporeal *living presents*, or what I describe for simplicity's sake as *time-bodies*. The concept of time-bodies is not meant to stand in for a grand theoretical argument, but is my short-hand for the reality of being embodied time-makers. Time-bodies are produced by an infinite number of interrelated entities in the future and the past and are also producing an infinite number of interrelated entities. We make time at the same time that we are recipients of the temporal worlding of millions of other time-bodies. As the title of this dissertation demonstrates, even the stories that we tell are actants in the making of time and the co-creative process of becoming time-bodies.[31]

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[30] Stacey Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2010), 2.

[31] I borrow the term "actant" from Latour, who defines it simply as "something that acts" and as such serves as a catalyzing force. The concept of *actant* is differentiated from *agent* as it is neither subject, nor object, and thus unable to be subjectivized as "agency" often is. I return to the concept of "actant" in chapter four in my discussion of immaterial and inorganic time-bodies, but in this case, I use it in order to reveal a nuance between the actancy of the story itself as it moves and affects others beyond the intentions of the *teller*. See Bruno Latour, *Pandora's Hope: Essays on the Reality of Science Studies* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1999).

I use this apparatus in relation to a variety of stories that have been told about gender, sexuality, culture, and nature. These could be called "case studies," but it is likely more fitting to call them timescapes, where timescapes refer both to multidimensional concepts of time and to a sense of time as relative to the observer or *storyteller*. Although the topic of each investigation (whether it is queer theory or climate change) comes to the surface as a key character in the narrative, the force of the engagement is less about the topic than it is about how we have told stories about said topic, including how we construct meaning and materiality through the stories that we tell—and likewise, how the stories that we tell are lines of flight that have infinitesimal impacts well beyond the conscious "I." The value of such a project is its potential to unsettle the fierce linearity of our stories about history, particularly as they impact our political movements, theories, and daily choices. We tell stories about the past as though they have hard edges, and so understand a present as an effect of historical causes. The consequence of this is that we often feel held captive by both the past and the future – a cause and effect paradigm that limits freedom in its articulation of "fate" or "well, it's always been that way." If we unsettle this model, we can start to see the openness of the future, the embeddedness of the past, and are able to recognize the absolute responsibility we have as stewards of the present. Put another way, if we "thicken" the present moment to include multiple pasts (and multiple futures) we are invited to act with a deepened level of accountability to all possible timelines.

Chapter one outlines the central argument of this dissertation and uses literary author Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* to craft an argument for the living present as a method of understanding. Relying on Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition*, chapter one also includes inputs from Bergson, Nietzsche, Colebrook, and Williams, in order to discuss concepts of becoming, duration, and difference. More specifically, Bergson's concept of duration provides an enriched

frame for the operation of contraction that Deleuze relies on in his description of the second synthesis of time, or the pure past, while Nietzsche's concept of the eternal return serves as an access point to Deleuze's third synthesis of time, also called the eternal return.[32] Both Colebrook's and Williams' work serve as lines of flight from Deleuze's discussion of temporality in dynamic and varied ways, both fine tuning and further creating the concept of the living present (in Williams' case) and generating valuable uptakes of the concept in feminist and queer theories in Colebrook's case.[33] This chapter will describe in great detail the fact that the living present is not a linear or chronological timeline, but rather a present which contracts the past in its anticipation of an unknowable future. As discussed above, when we sidestep a sense of time as chronological, linear, and progress-oriented (clock time, historical progression) we can open up past, present, and future to novel interpretations, understandings, and even outcomes. A linear time requires us to explain our reasons, motivations, or *causes* in such a way as to make sense of the present, a retroactive justification that reminds me of the adage "everything happens for a reason." When we use such tropes to gloss over pain or disappointment, we easily give up our own agency, but more importantly, we buy into the false idea that life is orderly, neat, and even predictable, rather than inherently messy, discontinuous, and unexpected.

Chapter one also uses the living present to demonstrate that there is no absolute truth of our past choices. Choices are complex, deeply interconnected, and just small parts of the many and multiple temporalities that are always already in process. As an individual, I am continually

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[32] Henri Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, trans. Arthur Mitchell (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 1998); Gilles Deleuze, *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Brooklyn, New York: Zone Books, 1988); Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Vintage, 1974); Gilles Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1983).

[33] Claire Colebrook, "Queer Aesthetics," in *Queer Times, Queer Becomings*, ed. E. L. McCallum and Mikko Tuhkanen (New York: SUNY Press, 2011), 25–46; Colebrook, "Stratigraphic Time, Women's Time"; Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*.

making various pasts and futures, just as my cat, which sits behind me as I type, is making her own processes of time. I see this point as critical because it brings with it an accountability to the stories that we tell, whether actively or passively, including the anticipatory stories we tell about the future. I use accountability instead of responsibility because there is no moral import to my argument. We are not compelled to act another way, we are simply accountable to our storytelling (history telling and future making) by virtue of having put a particular story, and not another, into the world.

With the toolkit of the living present in hand, chapter two, "The Time of Misogyny," serves as the first timescape or temporal analysis of a singular, though embedded, concept as it operates in the present, past, and future of our scholarly and community-based conversations about violence against women. I conduct a close reading of Kate Manne's *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* which gives new life to a bit of a dusty term, and therefore provides an avenue to retell some of the stories from our pasts. In particular, I address the interrelatedness of race and misogyny as it impacts Indigenous women and girls in Canada and as it has legitimized neocolonialism in American politics. As well, Manne's analytic framework expands our understanding of misogyny to political spheres, including the 2016 presidential race between Hillary Clinton and Donald Trump. Each of these stories has had a large impact on our cultural and political contexts within the West, and in the case of the latter, Trump's presidency (and concurrently his treatment of Clinton and other women throughout the election period) can be viewed as a tipping point into public engagement with misogyny as the enforcement arm of the patriarchal regime that has always had a grip on our lives. The final part of this chapter leans toward possible futures as it engages renewed feminist activisms, and various interventions into the time (and place) of misogyny and violence against women, girls, and Two Spirit people.

Chapter three, “Queer Time: ‘An Erratic and Uneasy Becoming,’” engages with the vast contemporary literature on temporality within queer and feminist scholarship. Through a somewhat rhetorical telling of my own process(es) of coming out, I demonstrate that although queer time operates to destabilize monomythic progress narratives, it is complicated by coming out practices. As a framing narrative, coming out enacts the creative self-determination of giving account of oneself while also demonstrating that in naming we limit; we implicitly put in place an understanding based on otherness and lack (I am not that and therefore this *other*). As well, the coming out narrative ascribes to the linear timeline a living present refutes. By stretching the coming out narrative, I demonstrate that it is an agential timescape that is always already embedded in not just a cultural-historical lens, but in material objects and emotional archives. It is through queer temporalities and the coming out narrative that I highlight the time-body: the addition of a thick materiality to the otherwise fluid and ever-changing queer subject. This addition provides a novel approach to identity construction/deconstruction in which the subject is univocal, rather than singular.

The fourth chapter, titled “Thick Time: Echoes of the Future” reads the living present alongside current discussions of the Anthropocene, the posthuman, and ultimately the anticipatory academic discourse about climate change. Like the previous chapters, though perhaps more so, this chapter will stretch beyond “philosophy” to include pieces from Anthropology, Science, History, English, and other disciplines in which we tell stories about, and thereby construct, our pasts and our futures. My discussion will travel through local politics around water and global fears of climate change, demonstrating that in each case we would benefit from thinking through a lens of thick time. Ultimately, we are well beyond the point of “purity” or rather a magical future (or past) outside of a messy, devastating, and oftentimes

hopeless present. The lack of progress-oriented politics that is central to the living present, is a continual reminder that we are always "in the middle of things." There will be no end to climate change just as there was no beginning. What really matters is our ability to better understand our complex and multiple present accountabilities within an otherwise incomprehensible process of change.

The concluding comments weave together the *living presents* discussed in chapters two, three, and four, with an eye toward the "so what?" Not only do I aim to identify the theoretical and philosophical outcomes of using a living present as an apparatus of understanding, but I also aim to identify our material and cultural outcomes. Through questions such as: what hold does the future have on the present? How does matter act as a memory? And what is the use of a living present for political and social projects? The concluding chapter will ground this work in a thick, durational, understanding of time, especially our own temporal forces as "time-makers" in each and every word, act, or deed. Whether we speak of a particular human, a tree, or a grade three course curriculum, a living present provides an expanded frame of reference. One which enables us to better approach a problem, foregrounds the vast historical context of a present moment, and gives us the space to really think strategically about the future.

Ultimately, I want the reader to understand their accountability to being a time-maker whether through their own storytelling, the memories that haunt their present choices, or the force of their individual expectations and anticipations of the future on present actions. Developing the living present as an apparatus of experience and understanding enables us to open conversations about misogyny, queer bodies, and extinction in chapters two, three and four where these chapters, as timescapes—or multi-dimensional, relative timelines—are more than methods of "waving at," "reading differently," or "thinking anew," and instead actually represent

processes of time-telling and time-making. By using the living present as an apparatus of understanding, I argue that we can deterritorialize the *event* (an event as small as my choice to make a cup of tea, or as large as a bigoted billionaire winning an American election) as well as approach questions of rights, politics, community organizing, and a changing climate and thus, these investigations move us toward multiple models of individual and communal accountability and action.

Following a discussion of the method of diffractive storytelling that frames my approach, the rest of this introduction involves a variety of stories about time as they have been told throughout Western philosophy, speaking to the impacts of these stories on how we both understand and *live* time in the present. In particular, I take up two paths of philosophical time-telling: 1) relationism, which argues that time cannot exist outside of its relationship to events or experiences; and 2) substantivalism, which casts time (and space) as independent entities. Each of these enjoy a varied cast of storytellers, and each have had grand impacts on our practices of knowing. My travels through these two "stories about time" take a diffractive path, following overlaps and ripples in the philosophies and stories of time, rather than attempting an accurate *telling* of history, and as such, although I will lean toward a more relational model, the goal is not to argue that one is *right* and the other *wrong*, but rather to demonstrate the force of each in crafting and creating the living present of today, yesterday, and tomorrow.

A Note on Method: Diffractive Storytelling

Before we move back in time, so to speak, I want to address my method of story-telling (others may call it philosophizing?) in more detail as it may feel a bit out-of-step with historical

methods.[34] One of the most legislative modes of telling stories (outlining an argument) is through chronology, particularly the teleological chronology, as the hero's journey demonstrates. So, for example, in a course introducing students to feminist philosophy, I start with Christine de Pizan, one of the first documented feminist philosophers, and work through Mary Wollstonecraft, Emma Goldman, Simone de Beauvoir, Betty Friedan, Lucy Irigaray, Marilyn Frye, Donna Haraway, and others from the mid-19th Century. In the last week of class I rush through contemporary philosophers—and by contemporary I mean scholars from the 90s to the 2010s. We debate first, second, and third-wave feminism; we talk about the heterosexual matrix and oppression; and we only have time to dip our toes into contemporary feminist thinking for we are rarely able to spend luxurious time in the present.

This method of history-making, philosophizing, storytelling tells the same story over and over again:

1. For centuries women were absent from the realm of philosophy, although Plato said some feminist things once upon a time;
2. Women who were able to get any of their thoughts into print were rich, white, or had rich, white, and scholarly lovers/husbands;
3. Women finally made it into the philosophy books when they started fighting for personhood; and
4. Once it really hit the airwaves, feminist activism, philosophy, and theory fit themselves into a series of waves: first, second, and third. Today we are in the fourth wave? post-feminism? post-modernism? We won't know until the era has passed.

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[34] Parts of this section were previously published in: Loewen Walker, "The Living Present as a Materialist Feminist Temporality."

In a dissertation that is about a living present, such methods of storytelling are a bit out-of-step with my overall aim and so to honour the life of a living present, I enlist a diffractive method of storytelling. One could liken it to Foucault's genealogical history of the present, whereby we are tasked with the project of telling time through historical and contemporary mechanisms of power; a diffractive methodology, however, is much more unruly.

Diffraction is a scientific term, where it indicates the way that waves bend and change when they reach or pass through an obstacle—called a diffraction grating—but it has also been enlisted as a methodological term, first by Donna Haraway, and then by Karen Barad and Iris van der Tuin.[35] Barad, like others within feminist and queer theory is hesitant about the process of "critique" that characterizes modern philosophy, and instead wants to shift her focus towards the production of new theories, and the development of alternate ways of understanding a changing political and social (and postmodern) climate.[36] In the context of telling alternative-histories, this hesitation around "critique" references the tendency to use critical narrative in order to mark a shift in thought or tradition. For example, the canonizing of the first, second, and third waves of feminist philosophy relies inherently on the arguments that each wave supercedes or overcomes the previous: i.e. second wave feminism fought for representational equality, where women fought for equal rights through the mechanism of having access to the same things that men had access to, being represented in the same spheres (voting rights), and occupying

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[35] Donna Haraway, *Modest−Witness@Second−Millennium.FemaleMan−Meets−OncoMouse: Feminism and Technoscience* (New York & London: Routledge, 1997); Karen Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway: Quantum Physics and the Entanglement of Matter and Meaning* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007); Iris van der Tuin, "'A Different Starting Point, a Different Metaphysics': Reading Bergson and Barad Diffractively," *Hypatia* 26, no. 1 (2011): 22–42.
[36] See Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010); Grosz, *Time Travels*; Rosi Braidotti, *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming* (New Jersey: Wiley, 2002).

roles otherwise withheld from them. This equality was gained through women maintaining the behaviours and values that their male predecessors held, including doing away with their "epithets of weakness."[37] Enter third wave feminism, and suddenly we are questioning the rules of the game itself. Why is it that women's equality requires the debasement of *women's behaviours*? Why must power, success, and strength be expressed by rationality and masculinity? Third wave feminism's success is its critical stance in relation to both second and first wave feminism as it worked to question the norms of gender that led to woman's secondary status in the first place. It is precisely this axis that supplants the narrative of the "waves" at all; just as the monomyth relies on overcoming adversity, the story is juicier when there is a conflict.

A diffractive method takes an alternate path. Instead of relying on the point of disagreement or critique, diffraction looks for unruly overlaps. Take for example the event of two pebbles dropping into a still body of water. The disturbance in the water around each pebble will produce a series of ripples which will progressively move outwards and the ripples from one stone will eventually overlap with those of the other, producing an additional pattern from the differences in amplitude and phase between the wave components. In science, this overlap is called an interference or a diffraction pattern, and in our work here, the diffraction pattern is precisely the unchronological overlaps and disturbances between modes of thought, memories, philosophies.[38] To illustrate diffraction at work, let's take Mary Wollstonecraft's *A Vindication of the Rights of Woman* (1792) and layer Simone de Beauvoir's *The Second Sex* (1949) on top. The relationship between these two authors is often simplified to a first/second wave chronology, when instead, a diffractive lens finds a compelling story about how centuries of female scholars

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[37] Mary Wollstonecraft, *A Vindication of the Rights of Women & A Vindication of the Rights of Men* (New York: Cosimo, Inc., 2008), 42.
[38] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 67–77.

have interacted with (whether intentionally or not) the prestige of scholarly husbands and lovers in order to make cracks in a male-dominated realm. Wollstonecraft's anarchist-scholar husband William Godwin contributed to her tale by publishing a graphic and detailed biography of her after she died of septicaemia following childbirth, while Beauvoir's fame was often-linked to her lover Jean-Paul Sartre. The overlaps between Beauvoir and Wollstonecraft are apparent, but it is their relationship with the interference patterns that gives us food for thought: Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir lived 200 years apart and in the time between their lives, women achieved emancipation in the UK and France (as well as many locations within the Western world). Emma Goldman famously paid tribute to Wollstonecraft in 1910 ("Mary Wollstonecraft: Her tragic life and her passionate struggle for freedom"), while also acknowledging that "Mary's own tragic life proves that economic and social rights for women alone are not enough to fill her life, nor yet enough to fill any deep life" and yet Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir were each judged on their failures to abide by common expectations of marriage and so-termed feminine-duties.[39] As well, both were denied legitimate standing as "philosophers" within their lifetimes, and were awarded such accolades retroactively and by way of fierce defense from their later readers. This is the story that is interesting to me as a feminist writer in the early 21st Century. It is a vertical and diffractive story that takes the overlaps and interferences to reveal the socio-cultural and economic factors that were and continue to constrain feminist thought.

Haraway further contrasts diffraction with reflective or even reflexive analyses which read things comparatively, looking for similarities and contradictions, or, as she writes:

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[39] Emma Goldman, *Anarchism and Other Essays* (New York: Mother Earth Publishing Association, 2010).

> reflexivity, like reflection, [as a critical practice] only displaces the same elsewhere, setting up worries about copy and original and the search for the authentic and really real. . . . Diffraction [on the other hand] is an optical metaphor for the effort to make a difference in the world. . . . Diffraction patterns record the history of interaction, interference, reinforcement, difference. Diffraction is about heterogeneous history, not about originals.[40]

Diffraction becomes a method of reading ideas and insights through one another, and of attending to relations of difference between them, including "how different differences get made, what gets excluded, and how those exclusions matter."[41] Contrary to apparatuses of reflection, such as mirrors, which produce faithful images of objects, apparatuses of diffraction mark the differences and divergences of overlapping waves. If we loop back to Wollstonecraft and Beauvoir's diffractive waves, we can imagine that their shared experiences of fighting for space within male-dominated spheres amplifies their overlapping efforts, while at the same time, divergences between their work illustrate precisely how "different differences get made" and how those differences have lasting impact. For example, Beauvoir's most well-known text, *The Second Sex* was originally translated by Howard M. Parshley, a zoology professor who was asked to edit and abridge the text as he went. The outcome was a text that scholars have criticized for almost 70 years as it is vastly different from Beauvoir's original monograph. In particular, Beauvoir's distinct existentialist philosophy was often re-routed through watered-down and inaccurate concepts. Existentialist terms such as "authentic" or "pour-soi" were translated as "real" and "her true nature in itself" respectively, translations which grossly

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[40] Haraway, as quoted in Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 71.
[41] Barad, 30.

misarticulate Beauvoir's meaning.[42] Beauvoir's trials with translation demonstrate a framing effect on her work, contrary to Wollstonecraft's original use of the English language, and thus offer an alternate jumping off point for explorations of what constitutes "philosophy," and how gender (and language) intersects with such definitions.

Returning to diffraction in its scientific function, Barad explains how it is not only waves that exhibit diffractive patterns, but that matter—that is electrons, neutrons and atoms—sometimes exhibit diffractive patterns as well. This discovery shifts the study of phenomena, indicating that diffraction experiments can be used to learn either about passing *through* the diffraction grating, or about the grating itself.[43] Like the interferences between waves, the use of a diffractive methodology within philosophy can read the *ripples* (the connections and divergences between theories), or the *disturbances* (the pebble itself, or rather, the question, context, or "cut" of the storyteller), and each of these demonstrate the way that practices of knowing *themselves* have consequences for what will count as a theory. Regarding Beauvoir and Wollstonecraft, we may dredge up the dropped pebble to recognize that I, as the one making the "cut" or choice on what to discuss, dropped a pebble into the relational readings of both of these historical figures. I am interested in the fact that both were read alongside male counterparts and that this is a common trope throughout history. If you, the reader, were to drop a pebble into the pool, you would inevitably read an alternate overlap, as you would bring your own interests and background knowledge to bear on the dropped pebble.

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[42] See Constance Borde and Sheila Malovany-Chevallier, "Translating the Second Sex," *Books & Ideas*, November 17, 2011.

[43] For example, the discovery of DNA was accomplished through an analysis of the diffraction grating in order to understand the structure of the substance in question. See Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 84.

Now, it can be argued that reflective and reflexive processes already recognize that the observer/investigator/theorist acts as an instrument in the construction of evidence. Barad, however, argues that reflexivity "still holds the world at a distance."[44] Reflexivity remains fixated on the relationship between an observer and a representation (an outcome) rather than seeing a relationship between an observer and an object. It assumes there is a distance between entities, or some purity surrounding an individual object, when, in fact, there is no such thing. Every practice of representation has an impact on the objects of investigation; every engagement with an object, is predicated on an entanglement between I and other that is always already at play.[45] Consequently, a diffractive methodology is a form of engagement that puts us in touch with phenomena over facts; becomings over things. Through diffraction, the goal is not only to "put the observer or knower back *in* the world (as if the world were a container and we needed merely to acknowledge our situatedness in it) but to understand and take account of the fact that we too are part of the world's differential becoming."[46] We too are part of the making of meaning.

At this point, diffraction starts to feel a bit esoteric, but in fact, as it is mobilized in my work it feels more akin to the method that Ahmed describes in her recent *Living a Feminist Life.* Ahmed talks about bringing feminist theory home to the everyday experiences of living, working, and learning as feminist killjoys, as willful subjects, as diversity workers. As such, the subjects of our feminist lives are our memories, the relationships we have with our teachers, our

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[44] Barad, 87.
[45] Barad, 91.
[46] Barad, 91.

choices of television shows, and we are as responsible for building feminist worlds as our worlds are responsible for building us. To this effect, Ahmed writes:

> It is the practical experience of coming up against a world that allows us to come up with new ideas, ideas that are not dependent on a mind that has withdrawn (because a world has enabled that withdrawal) but a body that has to wiggle about just to create room.[47]

This is the home of diffraction-as-method, it is the dusty adage of the personal-is-political. My use of a diffractive methodology is also inspired by Viviane Namaste's "Undoing Theory: The 'Transgender Question' and the Epistemic Violence of Anglo-American Feminist Theory." Namaste writes that Anglo-American feminist theory has done a great disservice to the actual experiences of trans women through engagements that have used the concept of "transgender" as a theoretical tool and not a subject of empirical analysis. Such a practice works to marginalize trans people, both through its failure to attend to the political and intellectual priorities that they have self-determined and through its systems of knowledge production, which delimit the terrain of trans scholarship. In a frank appeal for future efforts, Namaste writes "simply put, Anglo-American feminist theory would be well served by actually speaking with everyday women about their lives."[48]

Namaste's argument is specific to trans women, and bears repeating for its precise focus, and so in recalling her work I hold both the specificity of her argument and its wider application to the work that we do as philosophers and theorists, alongside one another. In the pages that follow, Namaste's challenge inspires me to talk to real people about their lives wherever I can. This takes place through reading research studies about queer youth coming out on YouTube,

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[47] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 18.
[48] Viviane Namaste, "Undoing Theory: The 'Transgender Question' and the Epistemic Violence of Anglo-American Feminist Theory," *Hypatia* 24, no. 3 (2009): 27.

reading news articles about water shortages on First Nations, and enlisting my own memories and observations where appropriate. It is not always possible to draw in these things in such a project, but where relevant, I have done my best to make room for voices (including my own) to speak and diffract alongside the theory.

As we move forward with a diffractive methodology, we may travel a bit out-of-step and out-of-time. Diffraction enables us to explore the ripples, offshoots, disturbances, and interferences within any living present, but diffractive methods don't always travel along a linear path. Rather they serve as both a reorientation and a paradigmatic shift in the way that truth, knowledge, and meaning are conceived. A diffractive methodology offers fertile ground for stories about futures, presents, pasts, and time-bodies.

TIME TICKING; TIME'S MEASURE

> We created the clock and now it is our master.
>
> —Lawrence Fagg, *The Becoming of Time*

In 1915 Albert Einstein (1879-1955) published his general theory of relativity. This theory brought space and time together as a unified process and monumentally shifted our understanding of time from that which happens outside of us or *to us*, to that which has changing properties, relative to the observer. On the contrary, Einstein's special theory of relativity demonstrated that on a grand scale, there is no fixed frame of reference in the universe; there is no house that holds our cosmos together. Instead, everything moves relative to everything else, and in the case of space and time, we cannot even think about space without also thinking about time. Einstein's General Theory of Relativity argued that rather than separate entities, space and

time make up one continuum (or a fourth dimension) called space-time. Space-time is best described through a curved or "warped" grid, where any mass or large object will distort space-time by forming a gravity well around the heavy object. As an example, think of a layer of fabric, tightly stretched across a room and then imagine placing a bowling ball in the centre of the fabric. As the bowling ball sinks toward the floor it pulls the fabric with it, thus bending the "space-time" around it. Planetary orbit, then, is the result of the sun's bending of the fabric of space-time. The earth travels along this bend, just as the moon travels along the earth's bend in the space-time continuum.

Long before Einstein literally curved space and time, Western science held tight to Isaac Newton's (1642-1726/27) closed Universe as developed in *Philosophiæ Naturalis Principia Mathematica* (1687). Newton argued for absolute space and absolute time where each was bound to quantifiable, natural laws. Unlike Einstein's curved and open-ended universe, Newton's universe was a fixed container in which items were held; it was the house that held our world together. Newton built his science upon the works of Galileo Galilei (1564-1642) adding to the posthumous accolades Galileo received for his daring critique of scientists and astronomers before him. Galileo fought for one of the most *revolutionary* discoveries in the world of science: the discovery that the Earth was *not* at the centre of the Universe. For centuries before him, people looked up at the heavens and saw the sun and stars move across a static sky that belonged to earth. For Galileo, the scene looked very different: he saw gravitational movement around Jupiter and other planets, he saw the stillness of the night sky alongside a moving, orbiting earth. Such a reorientation cost Galileo his freedom, but it so literally changed the very fabric of our earth in more ways than just giving it some celestial spin. Galileo transformed our concepts of

space and time from things relative to our environment (as Aristotelian science held) to things that are independent from their environment.[49]

Time became an absolute entity; space became an absolute terrain and both precipitated a scientific system that turned natural philosophy on its head and ushered in our modern understanding of science. Newton cemented this view through his famous claim that "absolute, true, and mathematical time, of itself, and from its own nature, flows equally without relation to anything external."[50] Newton enabled us to measure, predict, and study both space and time in a much more rigorous manner. Remember that Newton's was a "container" model, whereby both space and time existed as receptacles for movement and extension; this means that he supported the spatialization of temporality or the separation of subjectivity and temporality (whether I am seven years old or eighty, whether I perceive it quickly or slowly, time ticks along at a steady rate, because it is outside of me). Such a shift precipitated the invention of that object to which we slavishly submit ourselves for daily guidance and measure: *the modern clock*.

It is no great proclamation to state that the majority of our Western apparatuses of time-telling limit understanding to an external counting-of-moments. The clock is heralded as one of the most profound inventions of all time, with roots as far back as 2000 BCE. The invention of the pendulum-powered clock took place in 1656 by Christiaan Huygans, but before that there were sundials, water clocks, timesticks, and obelisks to track and measure time's passing. While the time-telling of the sundial relies on the movement of the sun alongside a carefully-crafted spherical scale, the mechanical clock captures time within a self-propelled apparatus. Following

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[49] Mark Muldoon, *Tricks of Time: Bergson, Merleau-Ponty and Ricoeur in Search of Time, Self and Meaning* (Pittsburgh: Duquesne University Press, 2006), 24.
[50] Isaac Newton, *The Principia: Mathematical Principles of Natural Philosophy [1687]* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1999), 6.

its invention, the mechanical clock garnered ownership over the passage of time, and thus began to direct the activities of the day. Today the hands of the clock, now more often a digital screen, have masterful control over our activities. I know that when my alarm goes off at 6:30am I have two hours before I have to be at work. I know that when the clock strikes 10:15 that there is no *going back* to 10am to quickly catch up on the 15 minutes I have missed. So what does it mean to move from a model where time is described in terms of motion to one where motion, movement, and change are described in terms of time?

This query has often been answered through two unique philosophies of time, namely relationism and substantivalism. Relationism shares a history with Heraclitus, Aristotle, Leibniz, and even Einstein to argue that time is not a thing in itself, but rather emerges from events; there would be no time if there were no events to mark its passing—*my passage from age six to seven is marked not just by the birthday party, but by every experience, event, and instance that takes place, each instant adding to the marking of a year*. Substantivalism, on the other hand, is Newton's piece de resistance, as he argues that time exists independently from any measure or mode of counting; the yearly calendar is just a map of a grand clock in which we move, play, and age.

Today elementary school textbooks cite Einstein's General Theory of Relativity as the "true" account of space and time (space-time)—its having superceded Newton's substantivism (and relationalism in its historical form); the mechanical clock, however, has maintained Newton's absolute universe. We never look at the clock and say "it's 1:30pm, but for my aunt who lives in Lake Louise, which is 5,449 feet above sea level, time ticks faster, so it might be

1:31."[51] Rather, the clock remains our North Star, and with it, a perception of time as fixed, constant, and external to us. We are all *governed* by the force of the clock's ticking hands and as they move ever-forward we rush, fret, agonize, and plan. These complexities—those of perceived time versus real time or relative time versus clock time—all have thick temporalities worth exploring. The following sections employ a diffractive method to telling tales of time through both a relationist frame and a substantivist frame. Just as diffraction illustrates overlaps, waves, and unpredictable ripples, the paths between and through these unique understandings of temporality are not linear, nor entirely distinct. Instead, *they wander.*

HIS-STORIES OF TIME

> I know well enough what [time] is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked what it is and try to explain, I am baffled.
>
> - Augustine, *Confessions*

Heraclitus' (540-480 BC) famous anecdote that "one cannot step twice into the same river, nor can one grasp any mortal substance in a stable condition, but it scatters and again gathers; it forms and dissolves, and approaches and departs"[52] has inspired centuries of non-linear prophetics about the ever-changing nature of time. If we make Heraclitus the protagonist

[51] In actuality, it would never be anywhere close to a full second ahead at a higher elevation—it only amounts to an increase of 90 billionths of a second over a 79 year lifespan. See C. W. Chou et al., "Optical Clocks and Relativity," *Science* 329 (2010): 1630–33. In fact, Einstein's famous "twin paradox" hypothesized that if one twin was to stay on earth and the other travelled through space in a spacecraft, the twin in the spacecraft would age slower than the one that stayed behind. Of course, this hypothesis has since been proven true through time dilation or the findings that the elapsed time measured by two observers, differs based on either varied velocities of the two observers, or divergent gravitational fields.

[52] Heraclitus, *Fragments*, trans. T.M. Robinson (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 1991), Fragment 91a and b.

in a linear story about time, we tell a tale of change, subjective-time, movement, and flows, as his starting point was the dynamism of the natural world (the river that coursed and flowed, the movement from hot to cold, cold to hot) and he heralded time as the signifier of unending change.[53] Significantly, Heraclitus' ever-changing river was not an open-ended multiplicity, but rather a symbol of the most pervasive law of the natural world: *change*. Change was the "hidden harmony" that kept "disparate multiplicity in functioning ordered unity," and furthermore, this hidden harmony constituted the "internal temporal nature of the world."[54]

Throughout all of his (very sparse) works, Heraclitus tried to break away from the beliefs and ideas of his contemporaries. For example, at a time when philosophers were attempting to explain the natural world in very logical and rational ways, Heraclitus held such logic in contempt. He wanted to wake his readers from their slumbers, criticizing them as lacking comprehension and sleep-walking through life: "But of this account, which holds forever, people forever prove uncomprehending, both before they have heard it and when once they have heard it. . . The rest of mankind (sic), however, fail to be aware of what they do after they wake up just as they forget what they do while asleep."[55] Heraclitus' distaste for the works of his own contemporaries reveals itself in his affinity for change, movement, and flux. In fact, he is often acknowledged as having generative force in the creation of the modern-day concept of *becoming*, as it has been enlisted by Nietzsche, Deleuze, Grosz, Braidotti, and others. As Nietzsche writes: Heraclitus "will remain eternally right with his assertion that being is an empty fiction."[56] Nietzsche applauded Heraclitus' refusal to solidify the subject, as instead, Heraclitus foregrounds

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[53] Charles M. Sherover, *The Human Experience of Time: The Development of Its Philosophic Meaning [1975]* (Evanston, Illinois: Northwestern University Press, 2001), 3.
[54] Sherover, 4.
[55] *Fragments*, Fragment 1.
[56] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Twilight of the Idols*, trans. Walter Kaufmann (New York: Viking, 1954), 481.

a changing subject in his account of the cosmos: “Fire lives the death of earth and air lives the death of fire; water lives the death of air, earth that of water.”[57] Heraclitus’ attention to the cyclical and transformative nature of the universe, invites a reading of *being* as a *becoming* where becoming is an always reaching, never arriving, expression of identity-as-change. *Becoming* describes a world that is not just home to change, but *is* change; there is no final destination from which we can look back at the becoming that led to *being,* whether that being is a human subject, a growing tree, a flowing river. Remember, you can never step into the same river twice, for the river is not just made up of millions of moving water droplets, but it is continually reconfiguring its location and its boundaries such as the eroding riverbank, the deer that drink from its shorelines, and the soils that disperse and compact at its riverbed.

Aristotle (384-322 BC) plays a supporting role to Heraclitus’ time-tale, linking time and change whereby time is a “number of change in respect of the before and after.”[58] This means that time is the means by which we measure change, so for example, when we observe the orbit of the moon or the movement of sunlight along the spokes of a sundial, the time that passes between point A (where the gnomon of the sundial casts a shadow at 6am) and point B (where the shadow is cast at 6pm) makes up the units which measure the passing of a day: a change from morning to night. If the gnomon’s shadow stayed in one place, there would be nothing to measure. Time would stand still. Note however, that Aristotle did not equate change and time: “time is not change but is that in respect of which change has a number.”[59] Time is not the movement itself, but rather the medium through which we can transcribe movement into

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[57] *Fragments,* Fragment 76a.
[58] Aristotle, *Physics*, IV.11 219b 1-2.
[59] Aristotle, 219a 2-3.

measure, ensuring that time is the mathematical complement and not a force in and of itself. Aristotle's link between time and measurement had such strength that it framed ancient physics right up until Newton (and Galileo's) temporal realism finally edged Aristotle's relational time out of the textbooks. Aristotle also described time as the *counting*, and in many ways, reliant upon the count-er (i.e. the rational human soul/mind capable of counting), a factor that thickens our telling of Einstein's theory of relativity (see above). In addition to empowering the human *counter*, Aristotle empowers our objects of counting—the calendar, the sundial, the clock—with significant power as the external measures that identify time's passing. Undoubtedly, the power of our objects of counting remains to this day as we fixate on the hands of the clock, and obey the pages of the calendar in structuring our physical and psychic lives.

Aristotle, like Heraclitus, made room for some of the more open-ended, relational understandings of temporality that have a huge influence on later parts of this project. For example, Aristotle links change and becoming when he talks about potentiality and actuality.[60] He writes that bronze matter is imbued with potential and that in that potential exists change. However, change is a sort of "pure" process distinct from the actuality of either the bronze matter, or its outcome, such as a statue. He writes: "Bronze is potentially a statue, but yet it is not the actuality of bronze *qua* bronze that is change. For it is not the same thing to be bronze and to be potentially something."[61] Again, we have a slice of the concept of "becoming" as that which resists a final outcome, becoming is change in and of itself. Take another example: if we imagine a freshly baked chocolate cake, we understand it as an entity unto itself. But if we backtrack to the ingredients used to make the cake: cocoa powder, flour, eggs, sugar, and oil, then we are to

[60] Aristotle, III.1.
[61] Aristotle, III.1, 30-31.

understand the cake as an actuality that relies on the cake-potential of the separate ingredients. In fact, the ingredients are becoming-cake, even as they sit in their respective containers within the cupboard. The piece that makes Aristotle's argument more interesting than merely an explanation of the parts (ingredients) that make up a whole (cake) is that the potentiality (the becoming-cake) exists apart from the cake itself. Once the cake is baked, its ingredients are no longer potentialities—they are actual chocolate cake. The ingredients as becoming-cake are pure potential only in their unfinished state. Like later philosophies of becoming, Aristotle's discussion of potentiality resists a world where all parts have definite outcomes, and instead enables a more open-ended world of *possibilities*. Consequently, Aristotle stretches toward a philosophy of change, and links time with movement, despite a historical landscape that found change suspect.

Speaking of which, let's take a side-step and switch our protagonist from Heraclitus to Parmenides in order to tell a very different narrative about temporality. Rather than viewing time as that which is related to change or motion (whether held in the mind or the units of movement), we instead have a story of static objects and fixed measures. A skeptic of sensory knowledge, Parmenides argues against a shifting and changing world, stating that there is no such thing as change. Reality is singular and fixed and therefore the passage of time is an illusion. Parmenides' student Zeno (490-430 BC), and his famous temporal paradoxes, supports the belief that time is illusory. Zeno's paradox of "The Arrow" argues that although we may be inclined to perceive the flight of an arrow as movement through time, such an understanding relies on our apprehension of the arrow as having been at a different point in the past than it is in the present.[62] Likewise,

[62] Aristotle, VI.9.

such an understanding relies on the anticipation of the arrow's movement to a higher point in the sky in the near future. Zeno argues that all we know of the arrow's physics is the position it occupies *now*, and furthermore, that it only occupies a space equal to its own size at any given *now,* which would indicate that each "now" is the arrow at rest and not representative of true movement.

In another example, Zeno foreshadows our familiar children's story about the tortoise and the hare in a race between Achilles and the Tortoise. Achilles, known for his speed prior to injury, gives the Tortoise quite a head start, but when he moves to catch up, he has to first reach the spot that the tortoise was at when Achilles started his race (Point A) at which time, the tortoise will inevitably have reached another point (Point B). As the story goes, once Achilles reaches Point B, the tortoise will be at Point C, and so on and so on. Despite the tortoise's diminishing lead, Achilles must still, seemingly, run an infinite number of steps within a finite time period. Contrary to the common-sense recognition that at some point Achilles will simply overtake the tortoise, Zeno ponders whether the task will ever be completed, determining that mathematically the infinite division of the tortoises' lead results in Achilles' never being able to reach Point X (the end point) (recounted in Aristotle).[63] Zeno's world relies on reason alone; the senses are unreliable witnesses. So, given that change can only be conceived of through sensation (visual apprehension of an arrow moving through the sky or Achilles' physical experience of passing the tortoise) Zeno claims its falsity.

Plato (427–347 BC) can be layered atop Parmenides and Zeno via his idealist or substantivalist view of time, whereby time is representative of permanence rather than an

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[63] Aristotle, III.1 and VI.9.

indicator of change. Plato's famous claim that "time [is] an eternal moving image of the eternity which remains forever at one" supports his argument that the eternal Ideals were ultimately nontemporal, but that *time* is an absolute entity, not unlike Newton's substantivalism with respect to space and time.[64] Consequently, our common concept and use of *time* came into being as a result of our apprehension of said movement: "the sight of day and night, and the months and the revolutions of the years have created number and have given us a conception of time, and the power of inquiring about the nature of the universe."[65] Quite different from Aristotle's time-as-the-measure-of-movement thesis, Platonic time *is* movement (of celestial bodies), and as movement, it exists outside of human apprehension, counting, or understanding.

Although not necessarily a cogent addition to stacked philosophers of substantivalism, I want to drop a pebble into one more pool: St. Augustine (354-430 AD). Like Plato, Augustine was suspicious of the workings of time, and so together they amplify the statement that "the past and the future *are not* (now), so they are not real,"[66]—prioritizing the present and rational apprehension in the same way that Zeno does through his mistrust of sensory perception. That said, Augustine had a penchant for the soul and brought a finite, substance of time from the exterior to the interior in his argument that time is a phenomenon of human consciousness. Augustine started by locating each expression within the present: "a present of past things, a present of present things, and a present of future things."[67] Together, these activities enact the processes of memory, direct perception, and expectation, all of which serve as dimensions of human consciousness. While Aristotle (and Plato, for that matter, though for different reasons)

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[64] Plato, *Timaeus* (Aeterna Press, n.d.), 37d4.
[65] Plato, 47a4-7.
[66] Adrian Bardon, *A Brief History of the Philosophy of Time* (Oxford and London: Oxford University Press, 2013), 25.
[67] Augustine, *Confessions*, trans. R. S. Pine-Coffin (Penguin: Harmondsworth, 1970), Book XI, 20, 269.

may have mapped the movement of celestial bodies to record the passing months and years, Augustine argued that the mind exacts all temporal movement through a dilation of these three processes, processes which engage and overlap in relation to a given request or need: "I can take out pictures of things which have either happened to me or are believed on the basis of experience; I can myself weave them into the context of the past, and from them I can infer future actions, events, hopes, and then I can contemplate all these things as though they were in the present."[68]

By bringing the internal world of human consciousness into play, Augustine changed the parameters of our temporal musings. In fact, he mirrors some of the processes of the living present: a reaching backward and stretching forward in order to garner meaning and understanding within the present. Despite sharing Zeno's reliance on the rational mind, he allows for an apprehension of futurity such that the "now" of the arrow may still include a "present of future things" whereby the observer could dilate the present movement to include an anticipation of the arrow's dip back to earth after reaching its crest in the sky (as per gravity). Needless to say, Zeno would not have bought into this projection. In fact, Augustine's philosophy of time lives in the overlaps and amplifications between substantivism and relationism, though, as we will see in chapter two, his limitation of time to human consciousness undergirds the location of time within the mind of the rational (male) subject.

Now, let's wind through substantivalism and relationism with respect to time once more. Take my memories of learning to ride a bike as a child. I distinctly remember the street (33rd St West, Saskatoon, SK), the house we lived in at the time (a plain duplex—white on top and brown

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[68] Augustine, Book X, Chapter 8, 218-219.

on the bottom), and the feeling of being scared and excited at the same time. We only lived on this street for a year or so, but I still travel past it regularly. Every time I pass by, I try to pick out the right home from the row of now-dilapidated buildings, and I think about how the busy street must have been much less busy back then to allow for kids to play safely. If the past is not *now* and therefore not *real*, is this recurring memory just a dream? Are my senses untrustworthy and my recollections merely fantasy? No, of course not, although given my previous mis-remembering of my mother's stay in the hospital, my memories are also somewhat suspect. Augustine enables me to engage with this bike-riding memory through a present-moment-dilation that reaches to the past in order to collect data from the experience, data which plays on my present knowledge of bike riding, the recollection of BMX bikes in childhood and the thick nostalgia that colours their recollection in the present day. All of this, however, would indicate very little about the "outside" world. Rather, they tell me about the parameters of my own self-consciousness; all of the memories encapsulated in the "now" that is my present.

So let us thicken the timeline and pull Heraclitus into the conversation. Imagine that each recollection of this bike riding experience is another dip into the river. Every time I remember, the memory changes: sometimes I see it from the outside, sometimes I am the subject of the movement. Another time the bike transforms into the red banana seat bike I had as a ten year-old, a few years, and many pedals later. The very act of reaching for the memory, changes it, and yet, is this to say that the meaning behind is lost? Zeno is clapping his hands at this point. "See! Your memory is unreliable! How can we trust anything that morphs and changes at every step?" My changing memory ultimately proves time's falsity. And in fact, as I remember the bike-riding lesson, I recall a yellow BMX bike with training wheels, but is that because that was the truth of the bike I was practicing on? Or is it because five years ago my father told me that I once had a

yellow BMX bike? Further, just as my mother rewrote her hospital stay, if I shared this memory with my dad today, would he rewrite it entirely?

We may be tempted to agree with Zeno, in claiming that our senses are unreliable witnesses, and yet, it is the engagement with the tactile, the sensory, that plays a role in the "stickiness" of memory at all. "Stickiness," in this respect, references the degree to which a memory attaches and lodges itself in one's psyche. The very process of writing, remembering, and piecing through my childhood experiences of learning how to ride a bike has made the memory very sticky. It's close-at-hand in a way that it wasn't prior to this venture. I have added smells, colour, and feeling to what were once just visual flashes. Now, to foreshadow chapters to come, the interesting part of all of this is that acknowledgement of my impropriety does not mean that a particular memory should be thrown out. Instead it tells us about the intricate blending of emotion, the new, matter, and memory that frames my bike-riding beginnings. Such blending occurs for many of us when we experience new things, when we are afraid, or when we are surrounded by unique visual, tactile, or sensory cues and each of these components plays a hand in the making of memory and thus the making of time.

Returning to our philosophical time-tellers, it is clearly the Heraclitan story of movement, change, and becoming that has more influence on the project at hand, and thus, the narratives of relationism which refuse to give time reality in and of itself and instead, track its *emergent* existence. Rather than sidling up to the substantivist's linear calendar, a relational thick time is both the condition of possibility for temporal experience and the event(s) through which time can pass. That said, as with any story (be it an oral history, journal article, online blog, or children's book) the storyteller makes choices that affect all other parts. I have chosen to make certain cuts alongside other connections and my choices mirror those that others have made, and in other

cases diverge. I could just as easily have begun with Henri Bergson to tell a story of duration and memory (cue chapter one), or with the tracing of earth's stratigraphical timelines as they construct eras of human and nonhuman life (cue chapter four). Depending on the storyteller, we tell a distinct tale about a present temporality and assuredly, we wind a new path with each "cut" we make, or each pebble we drop into the pool. The verticality of "thick time" stacks Heraclitus, Aristotle, Bergson, and Deleuze. Some likely partners, others not. In this particular stack, the slice might be change, movement, or becoming but we wouldn't be able to make a neat cut around the philosophies that accompanied the terms. Likewise, we could stack Parmenides, Zeno, Augustine, and even Leibniz and collect varied slices of Idealism, Rationalism, and time-as-idea. The power of a diffractive method, then, is that were we to cut along different lines—say those that speak of memory (St. Augustine and Bergson) or those interested in potentiality or expectation (Aristotle, Augustine, and Deleuze)—our outcomes would be quite different from those I have traced here.

This game of philosopher Jenga is not meant to water down the stories and their significance but rather to make clear the impact of the author's choice in telling any historical tale. I reiterate James Williams' guiding quotation: "We live as time makers, anything that exists is a maker of time."[69] Like many before and after me, I venture into a time-making process, and each pebble drop results in a new pattern of ripples. In fact, it is Einstein's overthrowing of a Newtonian Universe that illustrates this process most clearly in the world of science and philosophy alike. Einstein's Special and General theories of Relativity made it clear that time is not the linear safety blanket that we are accustomed to. Instead it is relative to both the observer

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[69] Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, 37.

and the position of the observer: there is no “right way” to tell the story. The key is that the criteria for my gleanings pull out different answers every time and this itself is a diffractive method. I travelled along the paths of both substantivism and relationism, not to determine a winner, but to show two modes through which we have understood time throughout the ages. And although it is the model of relationism that most echoes the project ahead, substantivism could be said to have even more impact as it is the frame against which relational time is argued.

The next chapter takes up this arrow by outlining the thick time of the living present as a method of understanding that also eschews a dichotomous relationship between space and time. Through this I hope to continue our project of both making time *matter*, and showing that it is our entangled material experiences that themselves *make time.*

ONE

THE LIVING PRESENT

Everything is imprinted forever with what it once was.

–Jeanette Winterson, *The Stone Gods*

Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* charts three different encounters between Billie (homo sapiens) and Spike (robo sapiens), two lovers who blur the boundaries between human and non-human, gender, and machine, across varying temporal sites. Early in the novel, Spike and Billie are on a ship that is travelling toward "Planet Blue," the new hope for a civilization that has destroyed its current planet Orbus. Billie has been solicited for the mission late in the game, so is learning of the plan mid-route. Spike tries to soothe Billie's anxiety about the project ahead by telling her that "This is a quantum universe . . . neither random nor determined. It is potential at every second. All you can do is intervene."[1] For Spike, an intelligent robot made up of metal, wires, and data, this prospect is exhilarating; for Billie, it is terrifying.

Moving forward, through, and back in time, Winterson's tale folds in on itself; time repeats and rewinds, love echoes through technology and organism, and cause and effect become the ever-more distant relatives of possibility and production. The novel's tone is apocalyptic as each of its three vignettes explore the theme of environmental destruction: the first and third

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An earlier and shorter version of this chapter is published as Loewen Walker, "The Living Present as a Materialist Feminist Temporality."

[1] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 62.

through an imaginative future where humankind has exhausted the earth's resources and has resorted to other means of consumption and control; and the second by traveling back in time to 1774 where "Billy and Spikkers" find themselves in the middle of British Captain James Cook's take-over and destruction of the lush, balanced ecosystem of Easter Island. Winterson's use of Easter Island refers to the factual Polynesian island of the same name. Also called *Rapa Nui*, Easter Island is famous for its 887 stone statues, called "moai" which were created by its early inhabitants. For Winterson, these "Stone Gods" represent the humanist desire to master both time and nature, but there is a sense in which she is less concerned with a present moment of global crisis than with reimagining the stories we tell ourselves about what constitutes the past, what counts as progress, and what humanity means in relation to a vast timeline of the earth's existence. In such an elongated existence, the time of human beings becomes just one moment among others. Displacing the reader's reliance on a linear narrative, *The Stone Gods* is self-referential, it trips over itself, gives away its own endings, and at any given moment, it could be revealed that what we think is the future is actually the past (or the present, or an alternate timeline altogether).

Like much of Winterson's work, *The Stone Gods* expresses the co-creative relationship between meaning and materiality. She enlists the *affective* impact of physical objects and spaces as stewards of the story (the Stone statues, the unattached and yet animated head of Spike, again a robo sapiens, in Wreck City, Easter Island in 1774, an imagined "Planet Blue" that serves as an experimental haven and post-apocalyptic home for human- and robo-kind). Winterson also introduces readers to the becoming of time, whereby time is a continuous process without beginning or end. "Planet Blue" (from the first vignette) has dinosaurs, monstrous gorillas, and many other creatures deemed prehistoric to earth circa 2018, but while Billie and Spike chart

their colonial trek, their approaching ship accidentally directs an asteroid toward the new planet. Sadly, the asteroid's collision with Planet Blue changes the mission entirely as it sends the planet into an ice age, thus making it unviable for human colonization. The crew turns back to Orbus, but Billie and Spike stay behind to witness Planet Blue's impending ice age. As they themselves drift away, Winterson reminds us that the future is also the past as she imagines the future of Planet Blue post-ice age: "there will be men and women, there will be fire. There will be settlements, there will be wars. There will be planting and harvest, music and dancing. Someone will make a painting in a cave, someone will make a statue and call it God. Someone will see you and call your name."[2] As Billie takes her last breath and Spike's power runs out, Winterson lulls them to sleep: "Close your eyes and dream. This is one story. There will be another."[3]

Winterson's *The Stone Gods* winds through the same story in various timelines, and yet, her approach is not merely circular: Winterson's stories are dynamic engagements with temporality and the past is continually re-imagined in its present invocations. The metaphysical implications of such a move signals a Deleuzian living present which is never a static "now," but always a stretching between past and future as it contracts all past experiences and expects those yet to come. Consequently, like Billie/Billy and Spike/Spikkers, we are continually moving through time. *We are layering feelings about signing up for a spin class upon haunting memories of that yellow BMX bike from our childhood bike-riding lessons, and using this pair to anticipate an outcome of dropping out of the class early; we are layering chapter one of the Stone Gods beneath chapter two so that when chapter two's Spikkers is human and male, we read him as trans. But is he transgender? Transhuman? Or both? And even more importantly, where lies the*

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[2] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 92.
[3] Winterson, 93.

transition from one to another when there is no beginning and no end? A living present also includes processes that exceed our human bodies, including bodies of water, the stone statues on Rapa Nui carved out of solidified volcanic ash, insect bodies, robo-bodies, the systems of a city as it breathes its workers in and out from dawn until dusk. Each of these processes is temporal, not in its adherence to an externally imposed timeline, but in its own temporal *becoming*.

By way of Billy, Spike, Winterson, Deleuze, and a handful of other literary and philosophical characters, this chapter provides the central and formative argument of my project: the defense of a living present as a *method of understanding*, both for day to day processes and for larger negotiations with community, culture, science, and history. The living present describes our ability to serve as *affective* time travelers, and in so doing reveals our ethical responsibilities to our past, present, and future worlds. Although we will explore some of these entangled responsibilities here, subsequent chapters will describe the impacts and potentialities of a living present in greater detail. This chapter will instead spend time working through the various terminology that both thickens (*as a fine and continuous layering of memory, experience, and anticipation*) and deepens (*as a vertical, rather than a horizontal stretching through time*) our understanding of a living present. Much of this terminology comes to us via Gilles Deleuze, but also through Felix Guattari, Henri Bergson, Friedrich Nietzsche, and of course, Deleuze's typical method of working very closely with canonical philosophers, but then stretching their work to new places—a process he describes as "approaching an author from behind and giving

Figure 2: Pebble Diffraction

him a child that would be his but would nonetheless be monstrous."[4] Such a process can easily be described as *diffractive* as it takes traditional texts in directions otherwise unthought. Think back to our example from the introduction of dropping two pebbles into a still pond (see figure 2). The overlapping waves become a new mode of thinking, just as Deleuze's unique methods of analysis diffract traditional texts so that rather than trying to determine the "truth" of Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason*, Deleuze enlists it as a means by which to think about the concept of critique itself.[5]

Not limiting himself to Philosophy, Deleuze conducts diffractive readings of literature, music, and cinema in order to test and prove his thesis that the arts are the creative venues through which becomings effect their environments.[6] Thus, not unlike Deleuze's explorations of

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[4] Gilles Deleuze, "I Have Nothing to Admit," trans. Janis Forman, *Semiotext(e), Anti-Oedipus* 2, no. 3 (1977): 113. For example, Deleuze's work on Kant interprets him in an atypical way by pulling out his theory of the unified subject and reading it instead as one of conflict and difference. Likewise, his explorations of Nietzsche's "will to power" turn the dictum into a vitalist and affirmative philosophy of all matter (human, non-human and otherwise), rather than a psychological drive to overcome resistance, as others have interpreted him. See Gilles Deleuze, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984); Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*.

[5] Deleuze, *The Critical Philosophy of Kant*.

[6] For Deleuze's texts on literature see: Gilles Deleuze, *Proust and Signs: The Complete Text*, trans. Richard Howard (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2003).Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Kafka: For a Minor Literature*, trans. Dana Polan (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986). For texts on music see Gilles Deleuze, *The Fold: Leibniz and the Baroque*, trans. Tom Conley (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press,

Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* or Marcel Proust's *In Search of Lost Time*, Winterson's *The Stone Gods* serves as an entangled parallelism to the living present. We could imagine that Gilles Deleuze and Jeanette Winterson might have been friends under the right circumstances, sharing stories at a mad-hatter's tea party, where they playfully encouraged one another to travel through their respective projects (philosophy and literature) by a rhizomatic chariot rather than by GPS. Both seamlessly construct a living present in the stories that they tell, though their individual "time-travelling apparatuses" differ. Winterson's tools of time-travel include concepts of love, humanity, apocalypse, and the body, while for Deleuze, the concepts include becoming, difference, imperceptibility, and the nomad. Notably for both, even the "concept" itself is suspect as Deleuze circumvents our instinct to understand concepts as those which reflect ideas or general notions and instead as themselves agents of meaning. For example Deleuze's concept of *becoming* engenders entirely new modes of being and Winterson's concept of *love* clearly makes love, rather than defines it ("*Love is an intervention. . . . Not romance, not sentimentality, but a force of a different nature"*).[7] Both authors instinctively conduct diffractive readings and tellings throughout their works as they resist mapping ideas, themes, and concepts to those that have come before, instead, dropping pebbles of all sizes into various pools throughout their travels through time. With this in mind, we begin our time-traveling adventures with the "concept" itself.

1993). Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema I: The Movement-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

[7] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 183, emphasis added.

THE MAKING OF CONCEPTS

> [Philosophers] must no longer accept concepts as a gift, nor merely purify and polish them, but first *make* and *create* them, present them and make them convincing. Hitherto one has generally trusted one's concepts as if they were a wonderful dowry from some sort of wonderland.
>
> —Friedrich Nietzsche, *The Will to Power*

As we travel through concepts such as becoming, duration, intuition, habit, difference, and then even past, present, and future, the linking thread will be the fact that all concepts are spatio-temporal; all concepts refer to the relationship between matter, time, understanding, and being (becoming), but in so doing, each of these concepts feel a bit like they are the great aunt once removed from the concepts we are used to. In *What is Philosophy?* Deleuze and Guattari demonstrate that "concepts are not waiting for us ready-made, like heavenly bodies. There is no heaven for concepts. They must be invented, fabricated." [8] Such a claim reveals both the permeability of the concept (the ways that we can question, reframe, reuse, and transform concepts that we otherwise take to be "truths") and the historicity of the concept (such that all understanding requires a genealogy of the very terms that we use to chart our course). Deleuze and Guattari also claim that "the concept belongs to philosophy and only to philosophy."[9] Is this an egotistical claim about the value of philosophy? No, they rather argue that if philosophy has any purpose at all, it is to create concepts (*new ideas, connections, alternate orderings of*

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[8] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 5.
[9] Deleuze and Guattari, 34.

reality). This is the third and most inventive function of the concept: it is a thing which *creates*. Think of the concept of love. Instinctively, many conjure up images of a man and a woman as a reflection of love. Every book that Jeanette Winterson has ever written has a philosophical and temporal engagement with *love* at its core, and *The Stone Gods* is no exception. As Billie and Spike wait for death on Planet Blue, they make love: "When I touch her, my fingers don't question what she is. My body knows who she is. The strange thing about strangers is that they are unknown and known. There is a pattern to her, a shape I understand, a private geometry that numbers mine. . . . She is a stranger. She is the strange that I am beginning to love."[10] Seconds later, Spike grabs a screwdriver to remove her legs in order to conserve energy; the juxtaposition reminds the reader that Billie and Spike are indeed *different* species. Spike is the universe's first robo sapiens, and as much as we are desperate to read the love-making as a reflection of what we know, it is a transhuman encounter that exceeds our reservoir of "ready-made" definitions of love and love-making.

The concepts of *love*, or *sex*, then, become the force that *creates* connection between partners; they are the unlikely affection that Billie feels for the robotic head of Spike that she carries around in Wreck City at the close of *The Stone Gods*. This third meeting of Billie and Spike echoes their relationship on Planet Blue, but the environment is vastly different in the rough, lawless Wreck City which Winterson describes as a "No Zone": "no insurance, no assistance, no welfare, no police. It's not forbidden to go there, but if you do, and if you get damaged or murdered or robbed or raped, it's at your own risk."[11] Spike and Billie of Planet Blue are slick explorers, brought together by a mission to save a dying world, while the

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[10] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 88.
[11] Winterson, 151.

characters skirting the edge of Wreck City are renegades trying to make sense of a Satellite signal from the past. Framing love as a wild possibility for same-sex and polyamourous relationships, for human and non-human, Winterson's *love* really is a Deleuzian concept. It enables "the power to move beyond what we know and experience [and] to think how experience might be extended."[12] Concepts as pure potential exemplify that as much as we try to contain and define them, they exceed our understanding. As much as we try to contain and define love, it always exceeds us.

We could also think of a concept as the canary in the coalmine that alerts us to the presence of a larger problem. For example, the thousands of pages that philosophers—and even more so, poets—have spent agonizing over the concept of *love* rings a bell of strong affection, unrequited desire, irrational attachment and wanting. In a world where emotions and feelings generally do not take centre stage, many have tried to capture love as a concept we can make sense of, when really it is the canary signaling to us that *love* is the furthest thing from philosophy, common sense, or that which we can define and hold on the tips of our tongues. Love is an opening up to the new and unknown world of an *other*: *"She is a stranger. She is the strange that I am beginning to love."*[13] The catch is, however, that philosophers are slow to admit the gas leak after they've developed a clear and distinct idea (concept). As Deleuze writes:

> Philosophers introduce new concepts, they explain them, but they don't tell us, not completely anyway, the problems to which those concepts are a response. [...] The history of philosophy, rather than repeating what a philosopher says, has to say what he [sic]

[12] Claire Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze* (Crows Nest: Allen and Unwin, 2002), 17.
[13] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 88, emphasis added.

must have taken for granted, what he [sic] didn't say but is nonetheless present in what he [sic] did say.[14]

Let us travel back to our game of philosopher Jenga from the introduction where Zeno has taken an arrow of time and rendered it immobile. For Zeno, motion is logically impossible because it cannot be perceived outside of the senses and so he is wholly suspect of change. If we are to follow a Deleuzo-Guattarian path, the more interesting question becomes "to what problem is Zeno's static time a response?" Why didn't he trust his eyes? His hands? The feeling of touch? What was it about the body and its greatest detectives (the senses) that had Zeno so afraid? It is no great leap to see that Zeno's fear of the bodily senses plays a role in the history of Western philosophy that has cast the body as the irrational "other."[15]

Rejigging our understanding of the "concept" is just one among many tricks that Deleuze plays on his reader. In fact, as one moves through his individual and collaborative work with Felix Guattari, it feels as though it might be helpful to have a Deleuzian dictionary close at hand (and many have been created).[16] Each new concept opens us up to new events, processes, and ideas, activities that are very compelling for feminist, queer, postcolonial, and other socio-politically-oriented projects. At the same time, each concept is a bell, ringing out about existing

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[14] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, trans. Martin Joughin (New York: Columbia University Press, 1997), 136.

[15] And many philosophers have made precisely this case. See: Beverley Clack, *Misogyny in the Western Philosophical Tradition: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Nancy Tuana, *Woman and the History of Philosophy* (New York: Paragon Press, 1992); Michèle Le Doeuff, *Hipparchia's Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, Etc.* (Cambridge, MA: Blackwell, 1991); Susan Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Philosophy* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1988); Genevieve Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1984).

[16] See Charles J. Stivale, *Gilles Deleuze: Key Concepts* (New York & London: Routledge, 2014); Eugene B. Young, Gary Genosko, and Janell Watson, *The Deleuze and Guattari Dictionary* (London & New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2013); Adrian Parr, *Deleuze Dictionary Revised Edition* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2010); James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003); Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*.

problems or gaps in thought. So let us take a rhizomatic chariot through some temporal concepts, beginning with one that has easily become the darling of feminist and postmodern projects, that is, the concept of *becoming*.

BECOMING-OTHERWISE

Becoming has a long timeline. It came to us largely through Nietzsche and then through Deleuze and Guattari, but we have since stretched and thickened its timeline to include many other engagements with *being.* As we saw in the introduction, we can travel all the way back to Heraclitus whose philosophy of change is retroactively cast as precursor to our twentieth-century fascination with *being-in-process*, or we can page through Elizabeth Grosz's 1999 collection of texts: *Becomings: Explorations in Time, Memory, and Futures* as a time-travelling map that rewrites Kierkegaard, Aristotle, and Hume (via De Landa, Alcoff, and Colebrook) as philosophers of becoming and agents of a process philosophy.[17] Becoming is a moving target. Its genesis has largely been through continental philosophy, but its productivity has been through its mobilization within queer and feminist fields where it provides hope for alternate world orderings, dynamic ways of being, and possibilities for social change. My own master's project explored the concept of "becoming-queer" as representative of a subject that is always and already exceeding the categories of sexuality and gender, but also a subject that never truly *is*; a subject that is always in-process and so representative of freedom alongside an endless string of "almosts" and "not quites." But as much as becoming speaks to a future that exceeds our present, the lived experience of subjectivity-in-process is often neither welcome nor safe in a world in

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[17] Grosz, *Becomings*.

which *being*, more than ever, garners power, stability, and calm. For example, the starry-eyed Masters student that I once was is becoming-otherwise as I work to layer a past that included twelve years spent in academia, atop five years as the Executive Director of a very busy and bustling queer community centre, and now a future where my instinct is not to "write an article" but to find a grant so that we can open safe housing for queer, trans, and Two Spirit kids who have been kicked out of their homes. Just as the stories and examples that I draw on have drastically shifted, these very terms: becoming, subjectivity, ethics, etc. have changed for me.

So now, we ask, what is this *becoming* really? What does it *do*? In *The Logic of Sense*, Deleuze draws on Lewis Carroll's *Alice in Wonderland* in order to illustrate the phenomenon of becoming.[18] When Alice first falls down the rabbit hole and is presented with the dilemma of fitting her body through a doorway that is half her size, she drinks a bottle of liquid which shrinks her down to the door, only to realize that she is now too small to reach the key, which she has left on the table above. Alice then eats a piece of cake which shoots her up to the ceiling, turning not only the door, but the table and key into tiny fixtures below. When presented with such an event, we want to understand Alice's movements/growth as having happened *in time*, such that when one says, "Alice becomes larger," they mean that "she is larger now; she was smaller before."[19] We identify Alice as huge and Alice as tiny as distinct events taking place in linear time. When thinking in terms of *becoming*, however, the timeline shifts. Rather than thinking according to distinct events, becoming "does not tolerate the separation or the distinction of before and after, or of past and future."[20] Becoming eludes the present moment;

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[18] Gilles Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, trans. Mark Lester (New York: Columbia University Press, 1990).
[19] Deleuze, 3.
[20] Deleuze, 3.

Alice is perpetually midflight. She becomes larger than she was at the same time that she is smaller than she becomes. Such a proliferation of identities and movements places an emphasis not on coherence, sameness, or self, but on *difference*; an ontology not of *being*, but of *being-in-process* as we have discussed above.

Becoming is moving in both directions at once: "Alice does not grow without shrinking, and vice versa" and furthermore, her becoming taller and becoming smaller do not occur in abstraction from the food and drink that accompany her change; much less the table, key, and doorway that are themselves becoming smaller/larger along with Alice.[21] As Alice grows, the key shrinks, both relational activities. In this sense, becoming constitutes more than an (anti)-identity claim, it expresses a temporality. Rather than thinking about time as a chronological counting of moments—sets of *befores* and *afters* that are progressively directed toward a future—becoming illustrates that time is a durational succession of change that apprehends any distinct 'moment' or 'present' as a becoming that is co-determinate with a live temporal frame. *It is never the beginning or the end which are interesting; the beginning and end are points. What is interesting is the middle.*[22]

DURATION AND DIFFERENCE

Alice's imaginative adventures in Wonderland exceed the *real-life* of bodily limits; it is not physically possible to eat a piece of cake and shoot up to the rafters (or at least no one has ever reported its occurrence). However, it is not the case that becoming applies only to children's storybooks and mystical treats. Becoming's *duration* is precisely the tool through which we can

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[21] Deleuze, 3.
[22] Gilles Deleuze and Claire Parnet, *Dialogues* (London: Athlone Press, 1987), 39, emphasis added.

really understand temporality both in Deleuze's work and as it foregrounds a living present. But to understand duration, we need to travel through Deleuze to Henri Bergson.

In *Creative Evolution*, Bergson writes that "duration means invention, the creation of forms, the continual elaboration of the absolutely new."[23] Duration refers to "pure time" or time that has not been limited by sets of minutes, hours and days (that is, time that has been spatialized, turned into a before and an after). This means that duration has no separation between present and past, whereupon we encounter a series of "presents" which happen and then move into the past. Instead, past and present are one and the same, operating together to create an organic whole. Bergson often uses the example of a melody to illustrate the flow of duration. Think of the notes of Twinkle, twinkle, little star: CC, GG, AA, G. Were we to play the second "A" in the melody (the lingering sound of "star") we would instantly spatialize the note, turning it into a thing at a particular time. On the contrary, when we apprehend the melody as an interconnected whole, it is the rhythmic organization of all of the notes together which make up the experience of music.[24]

In this way, duration is inventive, it is the "continuous progress of the past which gnaws into the future and which swells as it advances" for even though time is layered (remember our figuration of "thick time" from the introduction), Bergson supports the forward momentum of time.[25] It just happens to be a forward movement that also builds upon and changes the past in an infinite number of ways. Now does this mean that we can change the past? Simply, no. I cannot rewrite history to make my undergraduate degree in Philosophy a degree in Physics, but I can

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[23] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 14.
[24] Henri Bergson, *Time and Free Will: An Essay on the Immediate Data of Consciousness* (Mineola, New York: Dover Publications, Inc, 2001), 100–101.
[25] Bergson, *Creative Evolution*, 7.

shift my understanding of the past through present and future activities. For example, imagine I start my melody of "Twinkle, twinkle little star" on an "E" note. The fingering for the melody would start flawlessly: "EEBB" and then as I reach for the next few notes "CCB" the entire tune takes an ominous turn. The movement from B to C is a half-step, rather than the whole step between G and A of the original tune, so as we sing "little star" we fall into a minor tone. Suddenly the children's melody is not so joyful and the durational time travel in this moment is the recognition that my hand has fallen to the wrong starting point; it reminds me of my childhood lessons in music theory and gives a retroactive grimace as I cast a negative shadow on the first note played (the point at which I went astray).

Thinking durationally involves a radical shift in the belief in direct causality between past and present. We think that there is some virtual comprehension of the whole that precedes the musician's writing of the symphony, rather than recognizing the spontaneity of creating the melody. Often, the writing of music is far from a plotted, mathematical process, and instead it is somewhat "inspired." Fingers reach for familiar and unfamiliar sounds; the eardrums vibrate at varying frequencies as instinct and skill come together in the creation of an unanticipated tune. Duration therefore criticizes the retroactive way in which we explain the past through the belief that "if the judgment is true now, it . . . must always have been so" or "if the melody pleases us, it must have been planned out in advance."[26] In both of these ways, we attribute cause to effect, rather than recognizing a durationality that is open-ended.

So how is it that we loosen our shackles of cause and effect? Bergson uses a unique understanding of intuition to describe our means of engagement with duration. Divorced from its

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[26] Henri Bergson, *The Creative Mind* (Whitefish, MT: Kessinger Publishing, 2007), 22–23.

common understanding as a knowing sensation or instinct, intuition is the immediate and internal apprehension of temporality. It is contrasted with intellect, otherwise intent upon determining facts and data about *things*. The intellect limits us to a binary, or habits of thinking in terms of quantitative difference, rather than qualitative difference. For example, a quantitative, intellectual approach thinks about a melody as a succession of particular notes—CC GG AA G—while our intuition of the notes is qualitative; we perceive it as "Twinkle Twinkle Little Star." It doesn't matter that we don't hear the whole piece, as the few notes are enough to contract our sense of the familiar sound (and in the case of such a well-known tune, we only need the rhythm of the first four notes to contract an entire song).

Now, for any readers of Deleuze, it is easy to see the overlap between Bergson and Deleuze. Duration appears both implicitly and explicitly in Deleuze's conceptualization of being as constant movement and variation, and intuition-as-method lends itself to Deleuze's discussions of immanence, where immanence is the immediate, inherent apprehension of reality which all individuals experience. However, Deleuze (with Guattari) builds upon Bergson in critical ways, most notably by turning Bergson's "difference-in-kind" into "difference-in-itself" and extending the intuition of duration to foreground our previously discussed concept of *becoming*.

Just as Alice was becoming-tall and becoming-small at one and the same time, *becoming* indicates that all identity is in-process. There is no "self" at which we will one day arrive, we are always becoming-woman, becoming-animal, or becoming-otherwise. In *A Thousand Plateaus* Deleuze and Guattari often define becoming in the negative, writing that "becoming is certainly not imitating, or identifying with something; neither is it regressing-progressing; neither is it

corresponding, establishing corresponding relations."[27] However, the germ of the concept still comes through, and in fact it is their subtlety of definition that illustrates the true capabilities of the term: "Becoming is a verb with a consistency all its own."[28] The difficulty in providing a positive explanation refers to the fact that the term is *active*, engaged in ongoing metamorphosis and unable to be fully represented by a determinate definition. It is "pure change," in the same way that duration is "pure time," and rather than aligning with a systematic and definite definition, it—like many Deleuzian-Guattarian-Bergsonian concepts—remains open-ended.

Becoming, duration, intuition, and even the Deleuzian "concept" each signal distinct relationships between identity and time, or rather, a view of time as the force that denies a stable identity. Contrary to the belief that one can fit oneself into distinct categorical identities (she is a Caucasian woman; he is an African-Canadian man), becoming sidesteps such categorization. Not surprisingly, becoming has had significant impact within feminist, queer, and postcolonial projects, particularly for its role in troubling the categories (or concepts?) of identity we are used to. For example, *becoming* can illustrate that even concepts such as "heterosexual" or "homosexual" are stagnant and that our reliance on them limits our ability to understand diverse sexual practices. Rather than relying on definitions which emphasize coherence or sameness (i.e. *she* is in a relationship with *he*. That looks like heterosexuality—they are *straight*), *becoming* places the emphasis on *difference.* Put into play this can look like querying the differences between asexuality and heterosexuality, or likewise between aromanticism and polyamoury. Like the concept of the time-body, these diffractive paths encourage us to multiply our understandings of human connection, rather than to divide it.

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[27] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 239.
[28] Deleuze and Guattari, 239.

For Deleuze, difference is also a dynamically created concept of philosophy. In *Difference and Repetition*, Deleuze sets up *difference* against four historical moves: 1) Aristotle's argument for difference according to genres, species and classifications; 2) Hegel's discussion of difference in terms of an endless set of contradictions, or via the dialectic of thesis and anti-thesis; 3) Leibniz's determination that every identity can be undone by infinite differentiations; and 4) Plato's view of difference as that which differs from an original.[29] Each of these, he describes, defines difference in terms of identity or division, terms which act with reference to an *other*, while Deleuze charts a course toward *difference-in-itself*; an ontological difference grounded in nothing external. Aristotle and Plato are easy targets for Deleuze, as difference is neither the unique variations between species (cue Aristotle), nor is it the Platonic variation from an idyllic entity (the apple with the worm in it, forever compared to the pure apple of our dreams).

Think about a piece of music and our methods of differentiation and description. When examining "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" Aristotle might say: "'Twinkle, Twinkle' is different from Beethoven's 'Piano Sonata No. 20' (Sonata in G) on account of genre. 'Twinkle, Twinkle' is a folksong, while the 'Sonata in G' is a Sonata." How do we know this? Because a Sonata has a classificatory structure: it has three main sections consisting of an exposition, the development, and the recapitulation and the Sonata in G fits into this form. On the contrary, the folk song is characterized by simple melodies and narrative lyrics. Given the plain and poetic structure of "Twinkle, twinkle" and its history as a lullaby passed down through generations, it fits the genus

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[29] Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994). Note that I follow James Williams' detailed exposition of Deleuze's chapter "Difference in Itself" for this break-down (James Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Difference and Repetition: A Critical Introduction and Guide* [Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2003]), and although Deleuze spends time dissecting Spinoza, Nietszche, Heidegger, and others, it is the four identified above that have the greatest role in his argument for pure difference.

of folk song. In this case, the difference between the two songs boils down to category, or the degree to which they map on to a pre-determined set of classifications, and it is precisely this mapping that vexes Deleuze the most. Every time we "map" one thing on to another, or search for similarities and differences through a representational frame *(How does the Sonata in G mirror the Sonata form?)*, we turn difference into identity. We give novel becomings *form*; we fix them in place; we embed lives that are always in-process within set expectations. *Difference-in-itself*, or *pure difference*, is rather a multiplicitous enactment; it is not enough to differentiate between folk songs and sonatas, for each and every so-called "sonata" is infinitely different from the next. Lumping them all within one category only serves to stagnate and limit the life of the melody.

Hegel and Leibniz provide greater support for a view of difference which resists categorization as they each point toward infinite variations. Hegel engenders an infinite spiral of thesis-antithesis-syntheses and Leibniz allows for an openness to infinitely small and possibly unpredictable differential *undoings,* or as Deleuze describes it: "he discovers a play in the creation of the world."[30] The problem, still, is that Hegel relies on contradiction in order to differentiate (the antithesis contradicts the thesis and so difference stays in the realm of negation, or what it is *not*) and Leibniz' infinite differences still rely on *identity*:

> Between Leibniz and Hegel it matters little whether the supposed negative of difference is understood as a vice-dicting limitation or a contracting limitation, any more than it matters whether infinite identity be considered analytic or synthetic. In either case,

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[30] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 51.

> difference remains subordinated to identity, reduced to the negative, incarcerated within similitude and analogy.[31]

It is not, therefore, the differences between a folk song and a sonata that define them as different "types"; it is *that they differ at all* that gives them life, or rather, it is not the "differences which are and must be: it is being which is Difference."[32] This means that all there is, is difference; there is nothing else we can "name" about subjects other than their unique difference-*ing*. We can easily see how this supports the durational becoming of "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" (our agential and multiple little childhood melody) but how does difference-in-itself extend our understanding of time?

In anticipation of chapters-to-come I turn to queer theory where the term "queering" has long been used to signify movement: the twisting, shifting, and transforming capabilities of those practices which seek to disrupt heteronormative models. Rather than focusing on named categories such as defining *who* constitutes a lesbian (as though there is a transcendental lesbian-ness to which all instantiations refer), or *who* constitutes a trans person, and therefore *who* is able to count as part of the genus "LGBTQ2S," the concept of *queering* helps us to see difference-in-itself as the particular *happenings*, *events*, and *becomings* in which singularities (what we want to call the "particular," "individual," "thing," or "identity") engage and emerge. Take for example, the "L" in our familiar and ever-changing acronym. The concept "lesbian" comes to us from the Isle of Lesbos, in the Aegean Sea, where the Greek poet Sappho wrote lyric poetry about many things, including female lovers. Sappho lived during the 6th century, BCE and was born into an aristocratic family. She was celebrated throughout ancient Greece and often called the "tenth

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[31] Deleuze, 50.
[32] Deleuze, 41.

muse" or the "Poetess" contra Homer.[33] For hundreds of years after she died, her poetry was praised because of its lyrical sophistication rather than its homoerotic undertones. Christian authorities in the Middle Ages still rejected her, however, from the canon of Greek philosophers/poets because of homoerotic content in her works. Due to this, much of Sappho's poetry has been lost and all we have is one poem that is relatively intact ("Hymn to Aphrodite") and a series of fragments.

It was not until the nineteenth and twentieth centuries that scholars began digging through the archives to reclaim Sappho, and to make a more direct link between her poetry about women and her sexuality. Hence, terms such as *Sapphic*, *Sapphist*, and *Sapphism* all came to signify sexual relationships and desires between women, and today Sappho is a contemporary icon of lesbian and queer culture.[34] Although my telling of Sappho is chronological, contemporary *queerings* of Ancient Greece are wildly entertaining, whether for the scholar of ancient poetry who is thrilled to see herself in Sappho's lyrics, or the nineteenth-century historian who gasped at the thought of "The Poetess" in bed with Aphrodite. In each case, "lesbian" becomes the concept that signals the problem of same-sex desire as it has always bubbled up in an otherwise heteronormative world, and we cannot tell a full story without the unique events and becomings that led to the term. That said, the import of pure difference reminds us that it is never as easy as taking the "lesbian" of today and mapping it onto Sappho's poetry of the past, but rather that we are to recognize Sappho's lyrics as themselves the becoming-otherwise of desire, love, and sexuality. Far from defining her as a lesbian, Sappho's

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[33] Angela Gosetti-Murrayjohn, "Sappho as the Tenth Muse in Hellenistic Epigram," *Arethusa* 39, no. 1 (2006): 21–45.
[34] Margaret Reynolds, *The Sappho Companion* (London: Vintage, 2001).

desire for Aphrodite is precisely what Leibniz means as the "play in the creation of the world" and the passion that opens us up to the new:

> That man to me seems equal to the gods,
> the man who sits opposite you
> and close by listens
> to your sweet voice
>
> 5 and your enticing laughter—
> that indeed has stirred up the heart in my breast.
> For whenever I look at you even briefly
> I can no longer say a single thing,
>
> but my tongue is frozen in silence;
> 10 instantly a delicate flame runs beneath my skin;
> with my eyes I see nothing;
> my ears make a whirring noise.
>
> A cold sweat covers me,
> trembling seizes my body,
> 15 and I am greener than grass.
> Lacking but little of death do I seem.[35]

The project of *queering* the ancient Isle of Lesbos, then, is a mobilization of "pure difference" as it sparks various lines of flight both for Sappho and for millions of others experiencing their "tongues frozen in silence" or the whirring in their ears in the face of desires that cannot be mapped on to knowable expressions. Such *queerings* bring forth many different ways of understanding gender, sexuality, and desire where rather than searching for representation or sameness, we embody difference as the making of sexual subjectivity.

We seem to have gotten away from duration in this radical new form of difference, but in fact, the key component of difference is that it is *durational*. My unique subjectivity as a queer woman, the difference or singularity that is my DNA, cannot be understood as a timeless

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[35] Sappho 31, verses 1 -15. (Translated by Julia Dubnoff).

constant—the same "me" that persists over time. Instead, I am an aggregate collection of moments of growth, new experiences, sensations and ideas, and these moments do not merely *add* to some underlying core "self" but actually bring about the difference that is, in fact, also an "I." Thinking the ideas of difference and duration together, Todd May writes that "becoming is the unfolding of difference in time as time"[36]—and I would expand this phrase to read: becoming is the unfolding of difference as duration. This is the becoming-woman or becoming-self that is always in-process, and whose relational, interdependent subjectivity is the furthest thing from a fractured, completely random self. It is not as though I am a new person every few moments, with no recognition of the past that I was a part of. If I think back to the memory I shared of learning how to ride a bike at age seven, I may be made up of entirely different beliefs, feelings, and even cells, having been in processes of becoming for thirty years, but the layers of memory and repetition are enacted every time I get on a bicycle, drive past the street where it all began, or speak of the memory to others.

Much like the other concepts Deleuze relies on, repetition is not to be understood according to its traditional meaning: as the recurrence of the same. To sit down at a piano and practice a piece over and over again is not to play the same thing, multiple times. Instead, each time I play through "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star," I create the song anew. To fully understand repetition in this way, we invoke the differencing of repetition, such that repetition can never mean duplication or sameness, as though "Twinkle Twinkle" exists as a pure and ideal form somewhere. Instead the piece is a becoming: it is different every time, and it always represents a distinct event. Let's think about this in relation to another scenario:

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[36] Todd May, "When Is a Deleuzian Becoming?," *Continental Philosophy Review* 36 (2003): 147.

> Four o'clock strikes . . . each stroke, each disturbance or excitation, is logically independent of the other, *mens momentanea.* However, quite apart from any memory or distinct calculation, we contract these into an internal qualitative impression within this living present or *passive synthesis* which is duration.[37]

If we think of the clock strikes as A, B, C, and D, there is nothing about strike A that expects, anticipates, or needs the strikes of B, C, and D in order for its existence as strike A, in-and-of-itself. Taken out of the context of marking the hour as the fourth, the strikes alone are arbitrary. It is rather their *durational sense* that gives them meaning. That is, when we hear the third strike, we stretch the sound to include the first and to anticipate a fourth (or a fifth or a sixth), and we don't only stretch the particular instant of hearing a clock strike, but we stretch the experience to include our experiences of many past clock chimes, and many past presents of four o'clock. As well, we blend the chime into a waning sun or a stomach's growl in anticipation of a five o'clock supper. This temporal stretching is what Deleuze calls *contraction*. I have already discussed my use of this concept in the introduction, but to expand briefly, a contraction means that any moment of sense or understanding is the product of our reaching into the past to instantaneously draw on all past experiences so that the past has a resounding effect on the present (and the future). When I ride a bike, I contract years of movement in order to push off without toppling; contraction is passive (not conscious) and embodied as I cannot employ the cellular habits when I am not seated on the bike. Back to the clock, it is through our contraction of the distinct strikes of the clock that we instantaneously "restore them in an auxiliary space, a derived time in which we may reproduce them, reflect on them or count them" and thus vocalize an understanding that

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[37] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 72.

“It is four o’clock.”[38] The common sense way in which we turn the repetition of difference into the repetition of the same aligns with the way that we instinctively turn time into a spatialized counting: i.e. we take the strikes of A, B, C, and D as four strikes of the same, a set which we count and understand as a quantifiable identity of four o’clock. My legs move up and down on the pedals and “riding a bike” materializes as a result. Becoming ensures that we see more than different “beings,” “things,” or “identities,” and instead continue to hear the clock chime as the unfolding of different forces in a durational time; the bike ride as ever novel, never the same, but always a transcorporeal experience of body, machine, road, and weather. Through these examples we see that duration is the architect of both difference and becoming, and intuition the immanent becoming of difference itself.

TOWARD A LIVING PRESENT: THE THREE SYNTHESES OF TIME

We are hard-wired to turn difference and differentiation into knowable identities. We like definition and boundaries (knowing that Spike is a robot and *not* a human; knowing that Billie is a woman and *not* a man; knowing that the future is ahead of us and not behind us). But in order to embrace a living present, we need to break our boundary-making habits. Described as the present of retention and expectation, the living present is never a solitary “now,” but always a stretching between past and future as it contracts all past experiences and expects those yet to come. This means that the present is thick with every past that contributes to its articulation or understanding (think of the instinctive bodily-memories that made it possible for me to learn how to ride a bike), and likewise that the present stretches to the future through anticipation (pushing

[38] Deleuze, 72.

my foot down on the pedal anticipates a future in which the forward thrust has momentum, is received by the rubber pedal and translated through the chain and wheels of the bike). The living present shows us that these multiple processes are inextricably connected. They are comingled in each experience and each experience, in turn, is vertically stretched into an ever-thickening temporal moment. Deleuze's concept of time relies on three passive syntheses: the living present, the pure past, and the eternal return. These syntheses are passive because they do not rely on a consciousness that "plucks" memories out of the past, or rationalizes causal outcomes, rather they are unconscious acts of gathering from both one's own physical and mental (and spiritual) experiences, and the materiality of the world around us. The three syntheses work together in the meaning and mattering of time, but before explaining their interconnected operation, I will describe each synthesis as it operates on its own.

Regarding the first synthesis, the living present, the bike riding example continues as the experience draws not only on the muscle memory of my legs or fingers on the pedals and gears, but also on the mechanism of the bike itself. It lurches forward if I push too hard or topples over if I am too delicate. My body unconsciously memorizes, and commits to habit, movements that help and hinder my progress in the activity at hand. As with the example of the clock, habits constitute "our expectation that 'it' [the successive striking of the clock] will continue, that one of the two elements will appear after the other,"[39]—and therefore form the *material* of continuity. In fact, it is only because the present is a contraction of the past and the future that we experience a connection between strike A and strike B at all, or that I know to push my right foot down on the pedal while my left goes slack. We know that the chiming of a clock follows a

[39] Deleuze, 74.

certain form, has a particular character to it, and so are able to draw a connection between sounds which would otherwise be noise, just as I have a recollection of the lurching bike, the forward momentum that results from a contraction of past and future. This instantaneous stretch ahead and backward is Alice growing smaller and taller at once; this is the becoming that denies a stable identity, while ensuring that there is a subject, an "I" that persists. As I will demonstrate in chapter three, the first synthesis of the living present is the reason we have memory at all.

Before we continue on to the second synthesis of time, I want to attend to another concept of the *living-present.* Edmund Husserl's *living-present* haunts Deleuze's use of the term in name, but also because Husserl also enlists "forward" and "backward" movements in time through the processes of protention and retention. For Husserl, time consciousness is the fundamental function of consciousness; any experience, apprehension, or understanding results from our self-constituting temporal horizon, or the *primal stream*.[40] The time-constituting consciousness of the living-present has the greatest access to the *now,* while protention and retention serve as simultaneous dimensions of the living-present. Like Deleuze's "retention," Husserl's retention serves as an awareness of being connected to the past, including a mediation, or synthesis of the past. However, unlike Deleuze, Husserl's time consciousness is a condition of possibility for the constitution of all acts and objects in time; the melody would be a jumble of disconnected sounds, were it not for the ability to apprehend temporal succession. Time consciousness, thus, has a "width of presence" that includes a directedness toward the now of any object (primal

[40] Husserl develops his phenomenology of time-consciousness in *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)* (Springer Science & Business Media, 2012); For a detailed discussion of Husserl's phenomenology of time see Dan Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology* (Stanford, California: Stanford University Press, 2003).

impression), a consciousness of the not-now of the object (retention) and an intention of what is about to occur (protention).[41]

Although Deleuze pilfers Husserl's terminology, his tribute goes no further, for Husserl's transcendental consciousness places subjectivity at the centre of the living-present, while Deleuze's living present relies on neither consciousness, nor subjectivity. This illustrates Deleuze's common denial of a "self" that lies beneath as he writes "we speak of our 'self' only in virtue of these thousands of little witnesses which contemplate within us: it is always a third party who says 'me'."[42] Thus, the habitual activities of the living present are not the product of a conscious (or subconscious) dipping into our past to find representations of present events and signs, nor are they reflective operation of the understanding. As a *passive* process, retention is the process by which "a whole series is drawn together in one stretch or duration."[43] We can imagine the adult hand that reflexively pulls away from a hot surface, while a child reaches toward the stove, not yet having lived through the present that will add this experience to her plethora of habitual contractions or the first-time piano player who struggles to find the "G" on ivory keys that have not yet become a familiar language. Habits constitute our expectation that a familiar song on the radio will continue and not end abruptly after the next note or that when we turn the page of a novel we will find a continued and cohesive tale. In fact there is "no continuity apart from that of habit . . . we have no other continuities apart from those of our thousands of component habits, which form within us so many superstitious and contemplative selves, so many claimants and satisfactions."[44] For Husserl, retention is also passive, but the conscious "I"

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[41] See Zahavi, *Husserl's Phenomenology*, 83.
[42] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 75.
[43] Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, 60.
[44] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 75.

persists as the condition of temporal possibility for objects (melodies, burns) at all. Not only that, but Husserl resists a durational flow of time by relying on a clear structure of time-consciousness that follows horizontal lines within any series, so our protention and retention of a melody maintains the integrity of a note as it sinks into the past, despite its shifting mode of givenness (it changes from a protended note to a retained note, layered beneath and above the time-consciousness of the living-present).[45]

As these examples demonstrate, a key element of the living present, including its related processes of duration, intuition, and habitual contraction, is that it is not limited to human-centred understandings or psychological processes that only take place in a human consciousness. Just as the preoccupation with human consciousness has tied us to modernist progress narratives, our understandings of *time* have bound us to a metaphysics of counting, calculating, and of living "in" a time which we apprehend through human reason (remember our thickening of the philosophical *time*-line from the Introduction?). Instead, a living present applies to all organic, inorganic, human, and transhuman entities. *Everything* is made by way of the passive habits of contraction: "What we call wheat is a contraction of the earth and humidity. . . . What organism is not made of elements and cases of repetition, of contemplated and contracted water, nitrogen, carbon, chlorides and sulphates, thereby intertwining all the habits of which it is composed?"[46] This stretching beyond and through human consciousness cannot be stated enough in an argument for the living present as method, for it represents the most significant diffraction of Bergsonian intuition or Husserlian time-consciousness. As described above, intuition is

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[45] Husserl includes a diagram of time-consciousness that outlines these linear movements through time in *On the Phenomenology of the Consciousness of Internal Time (1893–1917)*; Zahavi includes a simplified version of Husserl's diagram on page 85 of *Husserl's Phenomenology*.
[46] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 75.

Bergson's philosophical method. It is the means through which we engage in an "integral experience" of the absolute uniqueness of an object, and is contrasted with processes of analysis or examination which break an object down according to known elements (the difference between plucking individual notes out of a melody and intuiting the absolute being of the tune itself).[47] As Deleuze weaves Bergsonian intuition and even Husserl's tri-partite living-present into his philosophy of time, he ensures that at no point is the living present grounded in a human consciousness. The living present is inhuman (or ahuman, material, technology, alive, inert). It is, in fact, a durational intuition, but it need not be grounded in any human or animal (or even material) subject, it is instead the thick *embeddedness* of meaning and mattering as it moves and modifies all entities.

Deleuze's second synthesis of time is the *pure past,* and he writes that the present and future are always dimensions of the past. Now why do we need a second synthesis if the first already links past, present and future in the living present? Although the living present is the process that makes time, it is a present which *passes*, and in order for the present to pass, there must be such a thing as a *pure past.* As Deleuze describes it, the pure past is not an inert substance, an archive into which the present moment passes and is stored until we call it to mind. The pure past is memory and the ground of time, but like habit, memory is not a psychological process, and is instead the whole of experience and sensation, a form of past-in-general that continues to act on the present through our passive "leaps" into the past. In this way, memory is the "being of the past" and any sense we make of the present at all is the product of its passing through the pure past through processes of contraction.[48] For example, when I place my fingers

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[47] Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 200.
[48] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 80.

on the keys of a piano I am transported back to my very first piano which had a large brown splotch of paint on the "D" key that was next to middle "C." I also pass through my past of curt piano teachers who were always disappointed with how little I practiced. Just as I can never play the same melody twice, and instead create it anew each time, "repeating the past always transforms the past . . . the past is as much in production as the present."[49] When I sit down to play a musical piece that I played effortlessly at age 15 and can only now pluck away at with one hand, my inability to read the notes contracts the many years that I failed to keep up with my previous skill and ultimately colours my piano playing memories with a wistful and regretful hue, rather than the rose colour they used to don.

Deleuze's third and final synthesis of time is the eternal return, a familiar term to readers of Nietzsche, who wrote:

> What, if some day or night a demon were to steal after you into your loneliest loneliness and say to you: "This life as you now live it and have lived it, you will have to live once more and innumerable times more; and there will be nothing new in it, but every pain and every joy and every thought and sigh and everything unutterably small or great in your life will have to return to you, all in the same succession and sequence—even this spider and this moonlight between the trees, and even this moment and I myself. The eternal hourglass of existence is turned upside down again and again, and you with it, speck of dust!"[50]

This often-quoted passage describes the eternal return cyclically and as though everything that has already happened will happen again and there is really nothing *new* that is possible in the universe. It has also been interpreted to refer to a query into *being*, that is, into what kind of

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[49] Colebrook, *Understanding Deleuze*, 64.
[50] Nietzsche, *The Gay Science*, 341.

person would be able to will the eternal return of the universe. Would it be one who lived a "half-life" of fatigue and negativity? Or one who said yes to whatever life offered, who expanded their connections and possibilities at any opportunity? Deleuze builds upon this second understanding to discuss the eternal return as a future that is a dimension of the present and the past. However, diverging from Nietzsche, Deleuze defines it, not as the return of the same, but the eternal return of *difference*: "The subject of the eternal return is not the same but the different, not the similar but the dissimilar, not the one but the many, not necessity but chance."[51] At the most fundamental level, Deleuze's philosophy is one where things *cannot* repeat. I will never play a song on the piano identically to a time that has come before. To repeat the same is to deny the passing of time entirely and to turn matter into a frozen image of thought (or to drop to our knees in front of Zeno, crying that he was correct all along). Through the third and final synthesis of time, Deleuze therefore ensures that the future is always a "cut" between before and after. It is always a launching into the new, but a launch that is entangled in the present and the past. And since difference returns as the new and not as the same, time fundamentally moves from past to future, and not the other way around. As a result, the eternal return expresses the force of pure becoming in a way that neither habit, nor memory are able to do, for it is itself the movement of diversity and multiplicity, of "difference and its repetition." The eternal return can therefore be said to express the constant becoming-otherwise of all matter as time.

Together the first, second, and third syntheses of time resist an ontology which grounds itself in human consciousness. They free us from the dualism between interiority/exteriority—time as inside or outside of us—and instead propose that time is the very making of matter,

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[51] Deleuze, *Nietzsche and Philosophy*, 49.

memory, and meaning. As James Williams' repeated refrain rings out "We live as time makers—anything exists as a maker of time" and as Jeanette Winterson pens on page after page of *The Stone Gods*: "Everything is imprinted forever with what it once was."[52] Ultimately, each minute, event, and vast contraction of time constitutes its own durational process, its own living present, which returns again and again in a differential repetition.

Now, it is easy to comprehend the contractions of a collaborative conversation, but how does this work in relation to inorganic matter? Think about the ivory keys of a piano. According to Deleuze, the keys (the wood, their coating, the connected levers and strings) would play an agential role in the creation of melody and it is not difficult to parse such a claim. I again remember the piano on which I learned how to play "Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star" and its anchoring brown splotch of paint on the "D" note. The result was that I never troubled to find my proper starting point—never accidentally turned "Twinkle, Twinkle" into a sad, minor key—until I had to play on an unmarked piano. Likewise, every piano played has a unique feel and weight to the keys, and such materialities undoubtedly change the flow, volume, and pace of the music. What this indicates for us, is that time is both deeply material (integrated with multiple bodies, things, entities, and events) and is itself formed by passive contractions of habit. Time neither pre-exists the contraction of the melody, as a timeline on which we find distinct notes, nor is it the container in which a five-minute long piece of music takes place; it is made by the duration of the notes themselves.[53] We could also think of this in relation to a tree: a tree that ages, grows larger, and decays is not acted upon by the passing of time, but rather making time through its movements and changes. In this way, matter itself is the force of time's passing and

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[52] Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, 37; Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 86, 119, 207.
[53] Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*.

consequently, Williams' "*we live as time makers*" includes tables, chairs, animals, and plants.[54] Existence is predicated upon the making of time, and each time-maker is part of a living present.

Each of the three syntheses—the living present, the pure past, and the eternal return—are equally important to my argument for a living present as a method of understanding as each of these feed into one another and no full understanding of time is possible without their cooperation. However, throughout the rest of this dissertation I blend all three into the living present, with this first synthesis subsuming all three processes in order to determine the *matter of time*; that is, the modes by which the present is multiple, not only in terms of its open-ended potential (the eternal return) and its thick durational memory (the pure past), but multiplied by infinite singularities (people, ants, chairs, economic theories) as they are each not only expressions of a living present, but makers of time. Unlike Deleuze, I don't divvy up the past, present, and future into unique, though interrelated processes, for they are all expressive, at all times, through the living present:

> *When I move through simple notes of a song, I am anticipating the sounds of the notes to come at the same time that I integrate the ringing of notes that have come before in order to create a melody. Meanwhile my fingers travel imperceptibly as years of habitual, temporal contraction land in instinctive movements, textures, and patterns.*
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> *When I write about Sappho I contract a memory of a trip I took to Greece six years ago with an ex-lover. We were warned that it wasn't dangerous to show affection publicly between two women, but that we should be cautious anyway. I contract a fabricated memory of Sappho on the Isle of Lesbos, living out and writing about her love for women*

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[54] Williams, 37.

and it both calms me (we have been here all along) and worries me (how many centuries will it take to be free).

As these rhetorical anecdotes relay, the imports of a living present are vast. On one hand, a living present resists a present that is a fixed "now" and so demonstrates that the time we experience as *present*, is always a stretching between past and future, while on the other hand, the living present provides a means by which to think time, progress, past, present, and future *differently* and therefore to imagine (and thus create) novel future relationships to matter, energy, environment, and sexuality (as future chapters will show).

This stretching of the living present resonates with phenomenological accounts of time and temporality, as we have explored through Husserl above. More specifically, Husserl's time-consciousness protends (stretches toward) the future, while it retains the images, sounds, or experiences that are present-now-past in a temporal ordering. Consciousness, then, stretches forward and backward, in order to give an object *time*, and consequently, to move forward *in time,* remembering that the stretch itself is not conscious but rather the elasticity of the present itself. The living present is supple, flexible. It is less about the passage of time than it is a liveliness of an immanent materiality (i.e. it is not the case that "I" am consciously stretching backward and forward as I remember how to play "Twinkle Twinkle" and anticipate the sounds the notes will make, but rather that the stretch is limitless as my fingers move unconsciously, as my ears layer the sound of this piano atop the hundreds that came before, as my feet reach for pedals that aren't where I thought they would be, as the echo in the room causes notes to resonate in strange and unfamiliar ways).

THE LIVING PRESENT AS A CHALLENGE TO PROGRESS-NARRATIVES

The rich value of the living present as a diffractive method of understanding will be brought into view through many different examples in the coming chapters, but a companion theme to these discussions will be the underlying critique of progress-as-Chronos that the living present enacts. By this I mean that our operations of thinking about time as chronological before and after binds our available understanding to a feedback loop of cause and effect. Such a chronology orients us toward a set of goals that will remedy the travesties of the past, and in so doing it remains fixated on the anticipation of a superior future. Such a future-oriented politics of temporality is problematic, not only due to its force and impact on the present, but its lack of freedom for the future. Adams, Murphy, and Clarke note the affective power of anticipation in maintaining such a perspective, describing it as "a regime of being in time, in which one inhabits time out of place as the future."[55] *Alice shrinks so that she can get through the door (and yet no one thought to ask why passage through the door warranted such heroic feats).* Though we need not be entirely critical of the function of anticipation, I remain concerned about the ways such a focus can form a totalizing orientation.

For example, modes of preparing for or speculating upon future events, whether in the realm of technoscience, biomedicine, or environmentalism, have the effect of bringing future events (and disasters) into the frame of the present moment. In this way, Adams and colleagues write that "the future increasingly not only defines the present but also creates material trajectories of life that unfold *as anticipated by those speculative processes.*"[56] Take for example

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[55] Adams, Murphy, and Clarke, "Anticipation," 247.
[56] Adams, Murphy, and Clarke, 248, emphasis in original.

the discourse surrounding new reproductive technologies. In "Disciplining Mothers: Feminism and the New Reproductive Technologies," Jana Sawicki writes that while fertility treatments, surrogacy, and genetic developments respond to infertility in increasingly adept and effective ways, there is a faction of the discourse that relies on the image of a future where there is *no* infertility as justification for procedures in the present. The result is that medical models and norms "isolate types of abnormality or deviancy, while [constructing] new norms of healthy and responsible motherhood."[57] Sawicki's argument that medical solutions to fertility issues will become the only methods of response, while other approaches will be ignored, illustrates the ways in which our anticipation of a future that views new reproductive technologies as the correct answer to the problem of infertility ends up working "*as if* the virtues of movement into valued futures are already known."[58] Interestingly, in Jeanette Winterson's post-apocalyptic world, reproduction has been entirely moved to the lab—"women don't breed in the womb anymore"[59]—and scientists have figured out a way to stop aging at a certain point so all humans get "genetically fixed" once they reach their 20s or 30s and halt the aging process entirely.

The uncritical acceptance of the *virtuous* movement into the future is akin to modernist progress narratives (monomythologies) or "the conviction that history has reason, purpose, and direction."[60] Through its description as having emerged in unegalitarian, unenlightened times, "modernity" embodies the movement of continual progress. Likewise, the thesis that "humanity is making steady, if uneven and ambivalent, progress toward greater freedom, equality, prosperity, rationality, or peace" emerges as a condition for the possibility of successful human

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[57] Jana Sawicki, "Disciplining Mothers: Feminism and the New Reproductive Technologies," ed. Jana Sawicki, 1991, 194.
[58] Adams, Murphy, and Clarke, "Anticipation," 251.
[59] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 22.
[60] Brown, *Politics Out of History*, 5.

subjectivity.[61] Folded through Sawicki's critique of new reproductive technologies, this progress narrative links with the logic of "consumerism and commodification by inciting the desire for 'better babies'"[62]—and in Winterson's tale, *better, younger, women.* The result is that such technologies are fundamentally perceived as enabling, as themselves *better*, more *productive*, and as indicative of technological *progress*. For Winterson's citizens of Tech City, progress looks like no one growing old, no one decaying, and a future that is wrinkle- and sag-free. For Sawicki, locating the problem of infertility within women's bodies means that new reproductive technologies can feed neoliberal constructions of time as a linear and cumulative movement *forward*, and buttresses the disparagement of women's bodies that we have endured for eons.

The force of the neoliberal progress narrative is also in need of a *queering*, as Shannon Winnubst argues that it is precisely a temporality of futurity that "anchors [a] contemporary politics of normalization."[63] By this she means that the social and political forces of capitalism, whiteness, heteronormativity, and nationalism are structured by their reliance on teleological progress narratives which maintain our "unwitting obedience to the future."[64] To contrast this, there is a long history within queer theory of re-imagining temporality outside of a heteronormative future of childhood→adulthood→ marriage→children→middle age→retirement→death.[65] While this trajectory may indicate the assumed course of development and growth for most, for many subjects (queer and otherwise), movement through time has often taken a different path, and as we learned in the introduction, for Edelman this path calls for a

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[61] Brown, 6.
[62] Sawicki, "Disciplining Mothers," 194.
[63] Winnubst, "Temporality in Queer Theory and Continental Philosophy," 138.
[64] Winnubst, 138.
[65] See Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*; Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*; Edelman, *No Future*; Winnubst, *Queering Freedom*.

refusal of reproductive futurity, or a refusal to obey a future that hinges on the figure (and reproduction) of the Child.[66]

Halberstam's "queer time" provides a negative case for what it looks like to side-step this trajectory, particularly in terms of the elongated adolescence that queer persons may experience, as they write "in Western cultures, we chart the emergence of the adult from the dangerous and unruly period of adolescence as a desired process of maturation; and we create longevity as the most desirable future."[67] Through questioning these pre-existing chronologies of maturity, we can instead trace the diversity and richness of queer subcultures, thus re-telling and re-imagining the time of a stretched-out adolescence, rather than directing ourselves toward a pre-determined future that casts a particular net of maturity and expectation.[68] Another example is found in the North American "It Gets Better" (IGB) campaign. IGB prides itself on "[inspiring] people across the globe to share their stories and remind the next generation of LGBTQ+ youth that hope is out there, **and it will get better."**[69] But critics have poked holes in IGB's imagined future. As one blogger writes: "The gay promise failed me. I went from being ostracized by my straight classmates in high school to being ostracized by many white gay men in an urban gay enclave."[70] In effect, IGB relies on the bootstrapping humanist narrative of the hero's journey, or the autonomous man who struggles through persecution (the requisitely painful teenage years of the queer youth) in order to reach an adulthood of wholeness, progress, and freedom from constraint.

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[66] Edelman, *No Future*.
[67] Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, 152.
[68] Though it does exert real and dangerous force on people's lives, the "heteronormative trajectory" that queer theorists address here exerts force on *all* lives, not only LGBTQ2S people. I reference this point of clarity again in chapter three.
[69] "It Gets Better," It Gets Better, accessed February 19, 2018, https://itgetsbetter.org/.
[70] Jason Tseng, "Does It Really Get Better?: A Conscientious Critique," *The Bilerico Project* (blog), October 3, 2010, http://bilerico.lgbtqnation.com/2010/10/does_it_really_get_better.php.

Unfortunately, the bootstrapping narrative is a neocolonialist myth, available only to those who occupy, or have access to various modes of privilege and power.

Now, it is not ridiculous to hope for a future that is different, a future where queer youth can attend high school without fear, or where reproductive technologies make it possible for two women to contribute genetic material to their shared child, or even for Billie and Spike to fall in love and live happily ever after on Planet Blue. Although there are problems with the myth that we can *progressively* reach a particular space and time of liberation and freedom, there is merit to the complexities of "hopefulness," "imagining the new," and "wishful thinking" that have been invaluable for feminist theorizing and political feminist projects.[71] Rebecca Coleman has written about the ways that "hope," like anticipation, operates as a potentiality, an interpellation into the future that *acts* on the present.[72] Though hope is arguably just as dogmatic as anticipation, its act of leaping into an unknown future, reminds us that "feminist visions of the future *have not* been realized in the present."[73] In fact, a feminism that is to be anything more than critique *must* be deeply and productively infused with an optimism that we are not doomed to live out the same injustices, discriminations, and violences *for all time*. This is the call that Grosz makes when she invites feminists to stop trying to reframe our existing political and ethical constructs and instead to imagine new ways of relating and being in the world. The key is to refrain from solidifying our hopes around what exactly a *feminist future* might look like, for this is where we slide into the static progress narrative. If we keep the future open-ended we are

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[71] See Rebecca Coleman and Debra Ferreday, eds., "Hope and Feminist Theory," *Journal for Cultural Research* 14, no. 4 (2010): 313–21; Erin McKenna, *The Task of Utopia: A Pragmatist and Feminist Perspective* (Lanham, Maryland: Rowman & Littlefield, 2001); Christine De Pizan, *The Book of the City of Ladies* (University of Michigan: Persea Books, 1982).
[72] Rebecca Coleman and Debra Ferreday, "Introduction: Hope and Feminist Theory," *Journal for Cultural Research* 14, no. 4 (2010): 313–21.
[73] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 187, emphasis added.

less likely to fix it to a fixed category or a predetermined classification. The potential of hope within this frame, then, is such that at the same time that it projects us forward, it recognizes the "persistence of the past in the present"[74]—or the fact that we are spurred on in the 21st century by injustices from the 20th. For example, we are inspired by the famous five's work to bring about women's suffrage in Canada and their efforts to bring the Persons Case before the Supreme Court of Canada. Their story reminds us that social change is, in fact, possible.[75] Hope's potentiality is one of inventiveness; in hoping for transformed futures, we, as feminists, are creating such possibilities.[76]

So, how are we to embrace this hope, including its untimely-ness and open-ended-ness, without unwittingly subjecting ourselves to a paradigm in which the rational, human subject remains at the helm of time's passing? A living present shifts the focus on an open-ended future, ever-so-slightly, to include the affective power of the past and the present, or rather, cueing Winterson's time travelers Billy and Spike, we cannot think of their story as the cumulative journey of autonomous individuals to a *future* in which we will finally access the knowledge needed to fix our *past* mistakes, and respond to our *present* environmental problems. *The Stone Gods* refuses to provide a sequential tale of cause and effect and instead it skips around on itself; it reminds us that by thinking in duration we can never fully mark the future as *future*. To this end, there is a scene late in the novel where the Billy of Wreck City finds the unfinished manuscript of *The Stone Gods* on the London Tube, presumably the copy that the reader is

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[74] Ahmed, 187.

[75] The famous five included Nellie McClung, Henrietta Muir Edwards, Louise McKinney, Emily Murphy, and Irene Parlby. The Persons Case was argued in 1927 because, despite most women having attained the right to vote in Canada, they were still not recognized as "persons" due to the British North America Act of 1867, and therefore not allowed to be appointed to the Canadian Senate.

[76] Rebecca Coleman, "Past and Future Perfect? Beauty, Affect and Hope," *Journal for Cultural Research* 14, no. 4 (2010): 357–73.

presently reading. She writes:

> I was traveling home on the Tube tonight and I noticed that someone had left a pile of paper on the seat opposite. . . . *The Stone Gods*, said the title. OK, must be anthropology. Some thesis, some PhD. What's that place with the statues? Easter Island? I flicked through it. No point starting at the beginning—nobody ever does.[77]

The novel's reflexivity ensures that the reader is never fully able to determine the chronology of the narrative; a piece (or manuscript) is always left behind.[78]

Curiously, one of the most compelling moments of Winterson's *The Stone Gods* story is also the most subtly presented, as Billie and Spike of the third tale are trekking through the rough Wreck City while navigating the all-powerful MORE, a global company that took over as the universal leadership after a world war ravaged everything on earth. This time, Spike is just a robotic head, the first ever developed, and Billie carries her around in a sling after having scooped her from the lab. In the closing pages of the novel, Spike is able to interpret a message dated sixty-five million years prior. The message says very little but includes one line of programming code for a robo sapiens.[79] Suddenly a timeline crystallizes as the reader remembers Billie and Spike freezing to death on the newly discovered Planet Blue. Dinosaurs trampled around them as the whole planet started to freeze over. Could it be that Billie and Spike of Wreck City are occupants of Planet Blue—the home they call Earth—sixty-five million years after the residents of Orbus destroyed their own planet and attempted to colonize a new one? *My drive for order suddenly tries to turn Winterson's multiple temporalities into one timeline.*

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[77] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 119.

[78] In fact, one of Winterson's editors *did* leave a copy of the unfinished manuscript at an Underground station in south London, where a fan found it and then returned it to the publisher.

[79] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 202.

But I resist my well-worn habit; the three vignettes of *The Stone Gods* must be read in reverse, out of order, or even horizontally, as if they are taking place simultaneously in presents that could have been. It is the reader that applies the temporal logic that anticipates a future and constructs a past. And it really is much more interesting to let go of my expectations for a coherent narrative so that each vignette is a living present, with a multiplicitous timeline that is stretched to include the effects of that which has not yet happened and to re-imagine a past that has already been lost.

Feminist Re-imaginings

To enlist a living present as a method of understanding is to develop a different sense of the "time" of history. Rather than relying on chronology, or the construction of a politics of the subject, formed around key dates and events which represent progressive states of self-actualization, we are able to think such events "out-of-time." A second value of enlisting a living present is its ethical role, as it begets a temporality of accountability. To illustrate this valuable function I take up one more example of a living present in action before moving on to our larger timescapes. Marriage equality was achieved in Canada through Bill C-38, the *Civil Marriage Act*, legislation which followed on the heels of eight of ten provinces and one of three territories having already passed civil marriage legislation between 2002 and 2005. In most cases across the country, it took a group of local individuals with the courage to bring suit against outdated definitions of marriage. As these small victories piled up in various courtrooms across the country, the federal government worked through layers of bureaucracy in order to pass the country-wide Bill. Canada became the fourth country in the world to legally recognize same-sex

marriage on July 20th, 2005, and although a Conservative Government tried to re-open the decision in 2006, they were unsuccessful.

In this chronological time-telling, the past is actual: "the set of archived and stored events that have occurred and been completed."[80] So the passing of Bill C-38: The Civil Marriage Act, constitutes a moment, forever emblazoned in the history of queer rights—the moment of emancipation. And yet, a living present alerts us to the underlying problems with such a telling of history. Here we have a group fighting for their rights and freedoms, attaining them, and then continuing to live on in a future that has *overcome* the past. The past in this narrative is a static, actual event, and the *telling* of such a past satisfies our addiction to monomythic progress narratives. If we take a look at this event through the diffractive lens of the living present, and thus enfold the present and the future, the living present introduces a responsibility to the past in the present "not as a specific demand from particular past commitments, but rather as an awareness that the present cannot absolve itself selectively of the past."[81] What this means is that a durational engagement with Bill C-38 contracts a variety of side-narratives which are entirely overwritten within the neoliberal progress narrative of marriage equality.

For example, in a detailed presentation of these side-narratives, Bronwyn Winter identifies the operations of homonationalism, marriage's weddedness to patriarchal systems of violence and control as they are silenced by the neoliberal success story of marriage equality, and trans-erasure (though she spends much less time on this last topic).[82] Drawing on Jasbir Puar in her argument for the homonationalism of marriage equality, Winter writes that "the persistent

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[80] Colebrook, "Stratigraphic Time, Women's Time," 12.
[81] Williams, *Gilles Deleuze's Philosophy of Time: A Critical Introduction and Guide*, 18.
[82] Bronwyn Winter, "'The Ties That Bind Us': The Hidden Knots of Gay Marriage," *PORTAL Journal of Multidisciplinary International Studies* 11, no. 1 (2014).

opposition by most (albeit not all) Muslim countries to the decriminalisation of homosexuality has provided a new means for Western and pro-Western nations to distinguish themselves as progressive in relation to the essentialised Islamic (terrorist) other."[83] As it operates within a global imaginary, marriage equality becomes the yardstick against which national morality is measured, and consequently serves as justification for Western interventions and boycotts of those countries that do not measure up. When we contract Bill C-38 and the institution of marriage itself, the gay rights agenda (and its successful achievements) overrides any discontent around the institution of marriage itself, whether through its enforcement of a heteronormative model of coupling, or its dark history of shrouding violence against women. Winter writes:

> That most violence against women happens within or in relation to a family context is noteworthy. I note in passing that gay marriage has not and will not resolve the issue of domestic violence, and am concerned at the naivety of the idea often advanced by gay marriage advocates that the latter will somehow in itself subvert or transform the institution of marriage.[84]

Lastly, regarding the conflicting narrative that marriage equality movements result in trans erasure, we must remember that Canada still does not provide full health coverage for gender affirming surgeries in Canada, and provincial services are spotty and far between. A living present reminds us that our stories have affective uptake, and so we may surmise that those stories that have a great deal of public *presence* can take up much more space than those that may not follow such a positive trajectory. As long as Bill C-38 remains the posterchild for gay

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[83] Winter, n.p.; See also Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2007).
[84] Winter, n.p.

tolerance, it will overshadow harms against trans people in judicial and medical systems and the absence of surgical and bodily-autonomy that many trans people experience.

As these diffractive narratives demonstrate, the passing of Bill C-38 is not enough to wipe the slate clean, as the Government might hope for; changing a law doesn't erase the homophobia, transphobia, or misogyny of the past; *allowing* queer people to wed does not erase the patriarchal system of marriage. Sara Ahmed might call this the "stickiness of the past" such that historical harms live on, not only in the body of the individual, but in the "skin," or the inter-generational affectivity of whole communities.[85] To forget the past *(and we are no strangers to such large scale forgettings in the face of historical injustices)* would be a "repetition of the violence or injury";[86] our bodies, our communities, and our ecologies, remember these pasts and continue to live through them as they are folded into our presents and our futures. Further, if we only focus on a future-yet-to-come, we fail to see that there are still an infinite number of past experiences, habits, and memories that enact our particular present. For example, a homophobic slur could be examined according to its distinct spatio-temporal location: why did *that* word come from *that* individual at *this* time? By asking questions about the wider materialities at play in any event we respond to the complexity of injustices that can not only bring about change for the better, but also reveal the assemblages of violence and negation which are *different every time.*

A living present means that the past always acts as a remainder: "each text, word, fragment and image of the past . . . acts as an always present resistance (or insistence) to a simple

[85] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 33–34.
[86] Ahmed, 33.

moving forward."[87] Just as we cannot expect to jump up and run away the minute after we twist an ankle, we cannot erase a history of exclusion with the great big stroke of "legalizing same-sex marriage in Canada." The past is retained in the anti-gay sermons of a Catholic priest and in the patriarchy that informs the concept of marriage itself. The living present is heavy with lineages that mimic, critique and undo our assumed histories, and rather than wiping away the past, or of seeking absolution for our actions, we can embrace this remainder, recognizing its ability to deepen our accountabilities to those pasts and their possible futures. In this way such a focus becomes a necessary form of ethical engagement with the world that begins not from the point of subject/object relations (or human/inhuman, nature/culture, cause/effect, for that matter) but from the position of being always-already entangled in space-time-world. Consequently, Bill C-38, July 20th, 2005 does not need to stand in as the day of queer rights in Canada, instead it can be folded into the present rise in trans suicides, or the staggering rates of homelessness for queer and trans youth as both nationally and in nearly every province, LGBTQ2S youth make up 30-40% of the youth homelessness statistics.[88] This is a gross overrepresentation that is due to their being kicked out of their homes, the lack of non-gendered youth housing, and the failure of available social services to adequately serve this population.

How do we read this politics of queer identity alongside the legislation of same-sex unions and the largely sanctioned bullying of queer youth? Just as Colebrook writes that "any feminist claim in our present is in harmony and dissonance with a choir of past voices";[89] any

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[87] Colebrook, "Stratigraphic Time, Women's Time," 13.
[88] See James Bar, "'Hey Faggot': Understanding That the Current Homeless System, Planning Policy, and Land Use Planning Tools Is Not Designed to Address the Socialized and Insitutionalized Disregard for the Lgbtq Homeless Youth Population" (Ryerson University, 2013); Saskatoon Housing Initiatives Partnership and OUTSaskatoon, "Need and Demand Assessment of Affordable Rental Housing for LGBTQ Youth in Saskatoon," Need and Demand (Saskatoon, 2016).
[89] Colebrook, "Stratigraphic Time, Women's Time," 13–14.

instances of violence against queer persons in the present echoes a past (and a future) of violence and discrimination that continues to act on our present. This method of reading entails a more careful inclusion of the apparatuses of knowledge-production that contribute to the organizing narratives of history. In fact, it may lead us to interrogate (and forget) those identities, representations, and reflections that we cling to—the way that we call marriage progress; the fact that we want sameness in our rights and freedoms, without questioning the complex systems that mitigate these rights and freedoms. The living present of a feminist politic is one where we can bring Sojourner Truth's bold query "And Ain't I a Woman?" to bear on twenty-first century identity politics for it re/creates a space where we can question the effects of this category "woman": the freedoms it affords, *as well as* the deeply-drawn boundaries on which it relies.

CONCLUSION

I enlisted Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* as a beacon for a Living Present. The central characters, Billie and Spike are the star-crossed lovers who find each other across time, sex, gender, race, and technology, lending to the quasi-Nietzschean view that life is the eternal recurrence of the same. However, as it plays out, Winterson adeptly illustrates not the return of the same, but rather a temporality that is fundamentally one of difference and repetition. History repeats itself in *The Stone Gods,* but each repetition differentiates the one that came before. As a result the novel tells us that we can never properly predict, speculate, or anticipate what the future will hold, at the same time that we must look deep into our presents and our pasts in order to make sense of those things that we think we know. Deleuze describes this dual process as that of always creating and always forgetting. On the one hand we are always participants in the creation of a world that is otherwise—and this is not a spontaneous, mystical activity, it means

that the examples I use here (queer rights in Canada, becoming-lesbian and becoming-queer) have force in future configurations of partnership arrangements and modes of sexual subjectivity. Holding the pages of Winterson's cyber-feminist-narrative between my fingers compels me to rethink the trajectory of a story, to imagine ways of writing and thinking that don't rely on a *beginning* and an *end*. On the other hand, we must forget those identities, representations, and reflections that we cling to—to begin from an assumption that heterosexual and homosexual constitute distinct and divergent *identities* is to argue for rights based on beings who are fixed in time. Were we to forget these identities, we may be able to multiply our understandings of the changing subject, we may begin to imagine differentiations not based solely on sex or desire, but rather on the connections and possibilities that are afforded by one's material engagements with the world.

Thus, Winterson's epithet that "Everything is imprinted forever with what it once was," is as much an ode to the living present as Deleuze's *Difference and Repetition.*[90] We can extend both texts to show that everything is imprinted forever with its own futurity, its own becoming. In many ways such an immense stretching of time indicates that there can never be anything purely "new" in the abstract, disconnected sense of being an originality, void of ties and conditions: each new becoming has a duration that contracts the past virtualities from which it came. And yet, it is important that we don't mistake this for a metaphysics of determinism, a sense that we are bound to our pasts and fated to our impending futures. If we understand memory as the passive contraction of the whole of the past, and further that this contraction influences, transforms, and re-creates the living present in a manner which returns as difference

[90] Winterson, *The Stone Gods*, 86, 119, 207.

and becoming, then there is a vast opening to even our own undoings. We are unable to remain fixated on being as a knowable identity and instead are stretched to comprehend the dynamic responsibility afforded by the living present. And this is precisely why it is so important to open up collaborative lines of flight between Deleuze, literature, feminism, and queer theory. The thick time of the living present shows us that we are all time-makers: we are the passive syntheses of habit, memory, and chance as they make and unmake the world around us. The living present constructs new feminist futures at the same time that it rewrites the stories and events that we take to be feminism's past:

> *Here is a moment in time, and my choices have been no stranger than millions before me, displaced by wars or conscience, leaving the known for the unknown, hesitating, fearing, then finding themselves already on the journey, footprint and memory each imprinting the trail: what you had, what you lost, what you found, no matter how difficult or impossible, the moment when time became a bridge and you crossed it.*[91]

Rather than unravelling history, such a living present reveals a past rich with potential, a realm of possibility to which we are accountable, but not bound.

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[91] Winterson, 80, emphasis in original.

TWO

The Time of Misogyny

> I know that for a lot of people, including a lot of women, the movement for women's equality exists largely in the past. They're wrong about that. It's still happening, still as urgent and vital as ever.
>
> —Hillary Rodham Clinton, *What Happened?*

When Hillary Clinton was running for President of the United States in November 2016, she faced some of the most misogynist, gut-wrenching criticism that the American public (and we as the Canadian public, America's awkward and ever-watchful step-sibling) had ever witnessed. Never once was Clinton treated as a viable political candidate. Instead she was the target of every sexist spurn, every misogynist's (no longer) internal monologue, and every shameful betrayal of women's hard-won rights. Right from the beginning, Clinton had public memory working against her. Her various, and contradictory, figurations within the American timeline—dutiful wife of Bill Clinton; unemotional political shark; loyal confidante to Barack Obama; private email conspirator—were stacked upon an inflexible timeline to produce vitriolic castings in the 2016 American election. Merchandise at the Republican National Convention included buttons, t-shirts, and bags that read "Hillary sucks, but not like Monica," "Life's a Bitch: Don't vote for one," "Trump that Bitch," and "KFC Hillary Special. 2 Fat Thighs, 2 Small

Breasts . . . Left Wing."[1] Such misogynist language is jarring in any context but was commonplace and even celebrated amongst Trump supporters, and, as is often the case in relation to women who threaten patriarchal power, Clinton was judged primarily along the lines of gender. This means that the slurs shifted depending on her emotional affect:

a) *Clinton shows emotion, she's too weak to be president:* In the 2008 primaries against Obama, Clinton was chastised across the media for welling up with tears while campaigning in New Hampshire: "Male voters are basically going to see a hysterical woman. . . Women are going to think that if Clinton is going to take on this responsible role and represent women in such a visible way she should do a better job and not expose the gender to this criticism."[2]

b) *Clinton lacks emotion, she's too cold to be a woman:* In 2015, Clinton was back in New Hampshire leading a forum on the problems of drug addiction and Annie Linskey, a reporter for the Boston Globe criticized her for failing to respond adequately to a woman who shared a story of her son's suicide. Linskey writes "Hillary Clinton physically backed up closer to a wall as she listened and nodded. When the woman finished her story, the leading Democratic presidential contender retrieved a microphone, turned away, and began asking another panelist to respond. . . . No real show of compassion. No hug or even a touch on the hand."[3]

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[1] Peter Beinart, "Fear of a Female President," *The Atlantic*, October 2016, https://www.theatlantic.com/magazine/archive/2016/10/fear-of-a-female-president/497564/.
[2] Emily Friedman, "Can Clinton's Emotions Get Best of Her?," ABC News Online, 2008, http://abcnews.go.com/Politics/Vote2008/story?id=4097786&page=1.
[3] Annie Linskey, "In N.H., Hillary Clinton Is Lacking in the Art of Contact," BostonGlobe.com, September 20, 2015, https://www.bostonglobe.com/news/nation/2015/09/19/hillary-clinton-and-her-team-new-hampshire-need-another-clinton-comeback-moment/CUq0i5Ji9pw89GcemUSMbP/story.html.

It is clear that Clinton was damned if she did, and damned if she didn't, and as they tracked both time periods, reporters didn't question their own acquiescence to the sexism that influenced their readings of the presidential race.

On the other hand, everyone's favourite villain, Donald Trump, repeatedly soared above his timeline. Any shameful past, present, or anticipated future mistake disappeared into thin air the instant it was invoked. For example, it didn't matter that Trump had had multiple marriages or a long history of infidelity, or that his PR experience centred around reality television where characters are required to inspire extreme and often competing reactions—cue Trump's entire political strategy, especially his targeting of Clinton. James Poniewozik of the *New York Times* charts his invincibility: "He is a savior or a disaster; a bigot or a patriot; a truth-teller or a buffoon; a commanding front-runner or a bubble on the verge of bursting."[4] Like many others who documented the 2016 election, Poniewozik predicted that Trump would fade from the race as time went on, but somehow, unlike Clinton, the stories had a positive rather than negative impact on public opinion. He could make impossible promises for the future and the world just laughed and rolled their eyes (or worse believed him); he could yell racist slurs from a podium and the crowds cheered him on.

Various tools of time-telling, memory, and anticipation acted upon both Clinton and Trump during the long, agonizing, election period and each figure travelled through time in distinct ways. Trump was an aberrant time traveler, able to dart through decades of bad behavior unscathed, while Clinton had no magic time travelling wand; one tear shed in New Hampshire in front of 16 voters in 2008 haunted not one but *two* elections; and every clear and confident

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[4] Beinart, "Fear of a Female President."

speech was read as arrogant and cold. So why is it that when it came to *making history* Trump had wings and Clinton had lead blocks on her feet? There are many possible answers to this question, but for our purposes here, I want to zero in on the most obvious: cold, hard *misogyny*. We all know what misogyny is. It's an old term that's whispered behind closed doors. It can be abrasive and I've had it spark defensiveness when invoked in community and academic environments. Misogyny's roots run deep within the histories of Western philosophy, sociology, psychology, political studies, and many other disciplines, and within these histories, misogyny is generally understood to be the hatred of, or contempt for women and girls. In a recent anthropological account of misogyny David Gilmore defines it as "an unreasonable fear or hatred of women that takes on some palpable form in any given society. Misogyny is a feeling of enmity toward the female sex, a 'disgust or abhorrence' toward women as an undifferentiated social category."[5] Though its presence within the literature remains largely within historical or anthropological studies such as Gilmore's, the concept has experienced contemporary uptake by an interdisciplinary audience.[6]

In the preface to her lucid *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny,* Kate Manne notes that when she began working on her monograph in 2014 she had trouble finding philosophical books

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[5] David D. Gilmore, *Misogyny: The Male Malady* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2018), 9.

[6] For historical and anthropological treatments of misogyny see Beverley Clack, *Misogyny in the Western Philosophical Tradition: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Jack Holland, *A Brief History of Misogyny: The World's Oldest Prejudice* (London: Little, Brown Book Group, 2012); R. Howard Bloch and Frances Ferguson, *Misogyny, Misandry, and Misanthropy* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 1989).
For examples of more recent engagements, just in the last year the following monographs have been published in disciplines spanning philosophy, communication studies, women's and gender studies, and cultural studies: Gail Ukockis, *Misogyny: The New Activism* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2019); Sarah Banet-Weiser, *Empowered: Popular Feminism and Popular Misogyny* (Durham and London: Duke University Press, 2018); Gilmore, *Misogyny*; Sadie E. Hale and Tomas Ojeda, "Acceptable Femininity? Gay Male Misogyny and the Policing of Queer Femininities," *European Journal of Women's Studies* 25, no. 3 (2018): 310–24; Kate Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2018); Jacqueline Ryan Vickery and Tracy Everbach, eds., *Mediating Misogyny: Gender, Technology, and Harassment* (Switzerland: Springer, 2018); Donna Zuckerberg, *Not All Dead White Men: Classics and Misogyny in the Digital Age* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2018).

or full-treatment articles on misogyny. She likens this absence to a sense that investigations of this nature are considered a bit "unfashionable" and that in some circles it's even considered "positively passé."[7] In an article that explores gay male misogyny, Sadie Hale and Tomas Ojeda chime in on this thread in stating that "while it represents a common form of gender-based violence, misogyny is an often over-looked concept within academia and the queer community."[8]

In my research for this chapter, I still had a hard time finding any explorations that moved beyond a definition of misogyny as man's hatred of women, but today, the airwaves are thick with talk of misogyny and many detailed investigations do a great deal of work to shine a light on misogyny's present (rather than only its history). One upshot of this current breadth of literature is a critique of misogyny's generally-held definition. Instead of Gilmore's definition, as listed above, Manne defines misogyny as the "'law enforcement' branch of a patriarchal order, which has the overall function of *policing* and *enforcing* its governing norms and expectations."[9] This definition shifts the lens from the individual misogynist who hates women, to the patriarchal society in which women are controlled, punished, and policed according to whether or not they ascribe to gendered expectations. Similarly, Sarah Banet-Weiser stretches the historical definition of misogyny to include "the instrumentalization of women as objects, where women are a means to an end: a systematic devaluing and dehumanizing of women."[10] Such a lens enables wide readings of misogyny in both individual actions and societal systems, a crossover that was arguably limited by previous uses of the concept.[11] For my purposes here,

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[7] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, xx.
[8] Hale and Ojeda, "Acceptable Femininity? Gay Male Misogyny and the Policing of Queer Femininities," 310.
[9] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 78.
[10] Banet-Weiser, *Empowered*, 2.
[11] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 31–32.

Manne's investigation into the logic of misogyny is not only timely, but also a rich analytic frame for explorations of the term's temporality. By this I refer to misogyny's contraction of centuries of storytelling about women, gender, sex, and power, as well as its physical, emotional, and psychological imprint on the bodies (whether a physical body, a school curriculum, or a political race) of its targets.

In addressing misogyny in this way, I acknowledge that misogyny is a weighty term. It is a heavy-hitter in a way that terms like sexism or even patriarchy are not and the concept itself is *affective* as it invokes specters of rape, sexual assault, hate-fueled insults, and practices of gas-lighting.[12] There is also a thick time to misogyny as it draws on an ancient Greek etymology of miso-"hatred" + gyne-"woman," and has presence in nearly every culture on the planet.[13] Despite these thick and heavy resonances, up until its explosive arrival within philosophical and cultural theory in recent years, "misogyny" as an ideological lens was not on the radar in the same way that it is today. By this I mean that use of word itself is on the rise, as referenced by searches of news headlines, academic, and other non-fiction work.[14] I also mean that its application has been widened to include a range of contemporary activities, events, and phenomena. In a text that examines the co-constitutive relationship between popular feminist and what she terms "popular misogyny," Banet-Weiser writes that in the 21st century misogyny is *networked*, that is, it is "expressed and practiced on multiple media platforms, it attracts other

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[12] To this effect Gail Ukockis writes that "For decades, the word 'sexism' seemed sufficient to describe the demeaning treatment of females. . . Sexism can be subtle, such as a man talking over a woman during a business meeting. In contrast, the word 'misogyny' is a much stronger word than 'sexism' because it is simply defined as hatred of women. . . . misogyny implies an overt and violent aspect" *Misogyny*, 1.

[13] See Gilmore, *Misogyny*; Holland, *A Brief History of Misogyny*.

[14] Manne makes note of this increase in reference to google analytics trends between 2015 and 2017 as well as searches within philpapers.org. In respect to the latter, Manne documented sixty-seven papers on philpapers.org after entering the word misogyny, and thirty-one listings after entering the word misogynist, as of May 11, 2017, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 31. I conducted a similar search and found eighty listings for misogyny and thirty-two for misogynist (February 27, 2019).

like-minded groups and individuals, and it manifests in a terrain of struggle, with competing demands for power."[15]

Misogyny's growing presence matters because, as a concept, it is different from other, more widely used sibling-terms such as sexism, gender inequity, or even patriarchy. Take sexism for example. Today in social conversations, the word misogyny can still quiet a room in the way that sexism cannot. When I vocalize *misogyny* in those instances where it is warranted, I feel a combined fear and defiance; it is the concurrent sense of having gone too far and having finally named the truth. I liken this to Sarah Ahmed's experience of being a feminist killjoy at the dinner table (and everywhere else in her life). In *Living a Feminist Life,* Ahmed shares a story about pointing out the racism of a dinner partner's discussion of Aboriginal people and concurrently experiencing the memories of being a killjoy: "a burning sensation on skin. . . . That flooding: it happens. It still happens. Feeling wrong, being wrong; being wronged."[16] Ahmed describes this as a *sensational* experience, whereby her use of sensation refers both to the feelings evoked by actions and touch, as well as the sensational outputs of the feminist killjoy as she speaks up, steps into an awkward dinner conversation, or is the object of a misogynist gaze.

These feminist sensations are bodily, we feel them on the skin and they often resist rational dissection. After telling of an experience of being accosted by a man while jogging, Ahmed writes of the visceral memory that stayed with her:

> My body its memory: to share a memory is to put a body into words. What do we do when these kinds of things happen? Who do we become? I kept on going. I began jogging again, but it was different: I was different. . . . Experiences like this: they seem to

[15] *Empowered*, 2.
[16] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 39.

> accumulate over time, gathering like things in a bag, but the bag is your body, so that you feel like you are carrying more and more weight. The past becomes heavy. We all have different biographies of violence, entangled as they are with so many aspects of ourselves.[17]

Misogyny is a sensation that is carried in the bodies of its targets. For many, it is a sensation that contracts memories, words, leers, and traumas and there is no speaking the word "misogyny" without shuddering at the marks it has left. Its weightiness haunts its absence and as its use in popular media grows, so too does its application to the many experiences of women, girls, trans, and non-binary people that may have had the sense, but not the logic to name it.

As the opening examples of the media coverage of Clinton and Trump's presidential race illustrate, the time of misogyny is *right now.* It is happening today, yesterday, and tomorrow, and at times its persistence feels entirely inevitable. It is therefore to some of these stories that this chapter attends, including stories about racialized misogyny and misogyny within and through the queer community. I also explore misogyny's reliance on static and fixed timelines for women, and the role this plays in Western colonialisms. Aside from reference to the misogyny that erupted against Hillary Clinton, the rest of the examples that I use in this chapter are not examples that centre on white heterosexual experiences of misogyny as many others have done thorough jobs of documenting these. The examples that I enlist provide opportunities to stretch and contract our understanding of misogyny, including both its function as a *concept* (in the Deleuzian sense that we learned in chapter one) and its duration. Alongside each of the examples I tend to, I conduct an in-depth reading of Manne's *Logic of Misogyny*, demonstrating how her

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[17] Ahmed, 23.

revised definition provides fertile ground for a variety of scholars to dust off the concept and get to work on a range of possible analyses that have previously been cut off by a limited definition of misogyny as the hatred of women.

To close this discussion I turn towards misogyny's future, particularly as its appearance in the past and present serves as a sort-of tipping point for intersectional feminist movements-to-come. On the one hand this tipping *point* is the tip of an iceberg such that the public iterations of misogyny to which we are privy are only the bravest (and most crass) expressions of what lies beneath the surface. On the other hand, this *tipping* point is akin to public intellectual Malcolm Gladwell's use of the term to mean "the moment of critical mass, the threshold, the boiling point."[18] As a "moment of critical mass" I acknowledge that in the face of blatant misogyny there have been riotous revolts such as the Women's March held in Washington on January 21, 2017 and concurrently in cities around the world. The #metoo movement is also indicative of a tipping point to misogyny's secretive stronghold and in Canada the #metoo movement has had influence on federal budgets as the once starved Status of Women Canada Office (newly re-branded as the Department for Women and Gender Equality) has a robust new funding portfolio aimed directly at reducing and responding to gender-based violence. Despite all range of backlash, both the #metoo movement and the Women's March have cultivated stories, speeches, actions, and offshoots. People around the world have put their bodies in motion and have shared deep and painful truths in public forums in an effort to pull the iceberg of misogyny up from the water to take a look at what lies beneath.

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[18] Donna Zuckerberg outlines the vast enterprise of the alt-right's activities to support men's rights, including the insidious ideologies of The Red Pill online community and its reliance on ancient texts as evidence that women are inferior to men. See *Not All Dead White Men*.

As this is the first of three timescapes to demonstrate the import of the living present as a method of understanding, as well as a means of intervention into the various stories that we tell, this chapter treads lightly on some of the bigger arguments yet to come (i.e. the argument for an immanent subject developed in chapter three and an argument for a collapse between material and immaterial entities found in chapter four). Instead, in this chapter I work to illustrate the efficacy of the living present in unravelling various stories and sensations of misogyny in and through time. The goal, of course, is to provide us with the tools to better think, write, and act in a present that sets out to take accountability for, and play a hand in creating, a novel future.

DEFINING MISOGYNY

On Easter weekend in 1995, two college-aged, Caucasian men—Steven Kummerfield and Alex Ternowetsky—kidnapped and murdered Pamela George in Regina, Saskatchewan. The high-profile and controversial case following the murder focused heavily on the lifestyle choices, race, and character of George, while praising the *otherwise* upstanding, reasonable, upper-class characters of the young men who committed the crime. The two young men were sentenced to only six and a half years in jail, dredging up numerous questions about the integrity of the case, particulary the blatant racism and sexism that made up both the underlying motives for the murder itself and which underlay the given sentence.[19]

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[19] See Barb Pacholik, "Court of Contention: A Look Back at Crimes That Divided a Province," *Regina Leader-Post*, February 9, 2018, https://leaderpost.com/news/crime/court-of-contention-a-look-back-at-crimes-that-divided-a-province; Sherene Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George," *Canadian Journal of Law and Society* 15, no. 2 (2000): 91–99; Betty Ann Adam, "Judge Accused Again of Bias," *The Star Phoenix*, February 21, 1997, https://walnet.org/csis/news/regina_97/phoenix-970221.html; David Roberts, "Pair Guilty in Slaying of Regina Prostitute," *Globe and Mail*, December 21, 1996, https://walnet.org/csis/news/regina_96/gandm-961221.html; Canadian Press, "Justice Slaughtered: Indians," *The Province*, December 22, 1996, https://walnet.org/csis/news/regina_96/province-961222.html.

In her well-known analysis of the case, Sherene Razack locates George's death and the "over-representation" of Indigenous women in the sex trade within a context of neocolonialism and spatialized racism. She writes:

> Forced to migrate to the cities in search of work and housing, urban Aboriginal peoples in cities like Regina quickly find themselves limited to places like the Stroll. Over-policed and incarcerated at one of the highest rates in the world, their encounters with white settlers have principally remained encounters in prostitution, policing and the criminal justice system.[20]

Although it is hoped that at a time nearly 25 years in the future the parameters of settler-Indigenous encounters have expanded from this limited trajectory, in instances of racialized and gender-based violence, this relationship persists. In one particularly salient news article, Barb Pacholik conducts a retrospective of crimes against Indigenous people that spans the time period of 1991-2016. Victims include Leo LaChance, Leonard Paul John, Pamela George, Fotios Frank Barlas, William Kakakaway, a woman whose name is protected in a court-ordered publication ban, and most recently, Coulton Boushie.[21] This is a story that is familiar in Saskatchewan. In each case, victims were killed under extremely racially-motivated circumstances and in each case court proceedings grossly under-penalized the defendant(s). Returning to the subsequent trial of the two young white men charged with murdering Pamela George, most news coverage (and court proceedings) identified her as a prostitute, rather than any other identifying terms.[22] In

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[20] Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George," 95.
[21] Pacholik, "Court of Contention."
[22] In fact, even news articles that identified the racism of the trial used "prostitute" as a framing identity for George. See Roberts, "Pair Guilty in Slaying of Regina Prostitute"; Canadian Press, "Justice Slaughtered: Indians."

fact, she was regarded by the defense lawyer, the Crown attorney, and the jury to be partially responsible for her death because she *chose* to participate in prostitution. Razack writes that:

> While it is certainly patriarchy that produces men whose sense of identity is achieved through the brutalizing of a woman, the men's and the court's capacity to dehumanize Pamela George derived from their understanding of her as the (gendered) racial Other whose degradation confirmed their own identities as white—that is, as men entitled to the land and the full benefits of citizenship.[23]

Pamela George was targeted at the intersecting axes of patriarchy and colonialism, and relatedly, her non-Indigenous attackers revealed their allegiance to the historical logic of misogyny as "disgust or abhorrence toward women that takes palpable form in society."[24] In fact, this awful event more closely aligns with what Manne calls misogynoir, borrowing from Moira Bailey to describe the misogyny that black women in the United States face.[25] Misogynoir includes the intersectional impacts of anti-black racism, heteronormativity, poverty, and patriarchy, and though I will not apply a term that is specific to black women in the US to an Ojibway woman in Saskatchewan, misogynoir provides space for a more complicated reading of George's murder in its clarity around the fact that misogyny is rarely just about *gender.*

This story has been repeated across Canada thousands of times. And the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls (MMIWG) was developed precisely to collect and archive the stories of women, girls, and Two Spirit people who have been kidnapped, murdered, and abused in a country that enables misogyny against Indigenous women and girls at

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[23] Razack, "Gendered Racial Violence and Spatialized Justice: The Murder of Pamela George," 93.
[24] Gilmore, *Misogyny*, 9.
[25] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 64; For Bailey's original discussion see "More on the Origin of Misogynoir," *Tumblr* (blog), April 27, 2014, http://moyazb.tumblr.com/post/84048113369/more-on-the-origin-of-misogynoir.

every stage.[26] Alongside the National Inquiry into MMIWG, another national initiative, the *Walking with our Sisters* exhibit situates the women and girls within tactile and spiritual cultural artefacts and ceremony. The exhibit includes more than 1800 moccasin vamps (the tops or "uppers" of a moccasin) that were beaded by volunteers from across Canada. Guests to the exhibit must take their shoes off to walk along the winding paths that frame the various arrangements of the vamps. Though they are very "real" in terms of their materiality, made up of leather, beads, thread, and hide, the vamps are *sensational* as their unfinished presentations are haunted by all those invoked by their presence, who never had a chance to wear them.

Recounting the murder of Pamela George and engaging with the haunted artefacts of *Walking with our Sisters* thickens our timeline of misogyny (remember that thick time is a transcorporeal slice of present, past, and future). This thickening pushes us to think about misogyny not as something one man *does* (cue Trump), but instead as a system of control and punishment that stretches around a body, a family, a town, a country. As I introduced above, Kate Manne's *Down Girl* takes aim at the more standard definition of misogyny as "primarily a property of individual agents (typically, although not necessarily, men) who are prone to feel hatred, hostility, or other similar emotions toward any and every woman, or at least women generally, *simply because they are women*."[27] She describes this definition as both too narrow and not focused enough. Its narrowness lies in its reliance on the individual misogynist's activities and beliefs, rather than the patriarchal ideology that provides fertile ground for misogyny. In Pamela George's case, we can see that the court's painting of Steven Kummerfield and Alex Ternowetsky as white middle-class college boys who just wanted to have some fun

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[26] See "MMIWG – National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls," accessed February 27, 2019, http://www.mmiwg-ffada.ca/.
[27] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 32.

directed them away from being classed as misogynists. Manne, then, indicates that historical definitions of misogyny lack focus because they apply to all women, *because they are women,* rather than as particular women who engage in particular activities. The most overt failure of this broad approach is that the misogynist must demonstrate a deep and sustained hatred for all women qua woman, a factor which renders it quite rare in presentation. This definition worked against Pamela George as her murderers were never penalized for having beaten her because she was an Indigenous woman who was also a sex worker, though these subject positions were precisely what fueled the attack.

Understanding how misogyny works to police particular women in particular contexts also requires that we differentiate between sexism and misogyny such that although the two share a mission to "maintain or restore a patriarchal order," misogyny functions as an enforcing branch of patriarchy, while sexism functions as the rationalization and justificatory branch.[28] This means that sexism often operates to naturalize sex differences or to make them seem inevitable, thus upholding sexist hiring practices or social arrangements. On the contrary, misogyny "ought to be understood as the system that operates within a patriarchal social order to police and enforce women's subordination and to uphold male dominance."[29] This means that misogyny has the potential to target women quite selectively "rather than targeting women across the board."[30] Playing up these different arms of patriarchy (rationalizing and enforcing), Manne further differentiates between the two terms in claiming that "sexism can be complacent

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[28] Manne, 80.
[29] Manne, 33.
[30] Manne, 79.

[while] misogyny may be anxious" and finally that "sexism has a theory; misogyny wields a cudgel."[31]

We've seen the anxious wielding of a cudgel at work many times, and thus, returning to the 2016 American election for a moment, it is no accident that the language and stories surrounding the period included some of the most racist, homophobic, misogynist, and patriarchal language we have heard publicly in decades. Manne outlines precisely the dangerous boundaries that Hillary Clinton dared to cross in running for President of the United States, most obviously her daring to take "masculine-coded goods *away* from dominant men."[32] These goods include power, prestige, rank, money, wealth, hierarchical status, among others, and Clinton's fault was not only her attempt to take the presidency (and all of its related coding), but her seeming failure to provide "*feminine-coded goods and services*: attention, affection, admiration, sympathy, sex and children (i.e., social, domestic, reproductive, and emotional labor); also mixed goods, such as safe haven, nurture, security, soothing, and comfort."[33] Despite female politicians already being common targets for misogynist aggression, women such as Clinton, who dare to take masculine-coded goods are liable to be written off as "greedy, corrupt, illicitly entitled, and out of order."[34] The anxiety that Clinton caused the patriarchal order is rampant in the treatment she received from Trump, the press, other women, and even feminists.[35]

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[31] Manne, 88.
[32] Manne, 130.
[33] Manne, 130.
[34] Manne, 132.
[35] See Banet-Weiser, *Empowered*; Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*; Hillary Rodham Clinton, *What Happened* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 2017); Lindsey Meeks, "All the Gender That's Fit to Print: How the New York Times Covered Hillary Clinton and Sarah Palin in 2008," *Journalism and Mass Communication Quarterly; Thousand Oaks* 90, no. 3 (September 2013): 520–39; Shih-Hsien Hsu, "From First Lady to Presidential Candidate: How Have the Media Framed the Image of Hillary Rodham Clinton?," *Conference Papers -- International Communication Association*, Annual Meeting 2009, 1–27; Friedman, "Can Clinton's Emotions Get Best of Her?"; Linskey, "In N.H., Hillary Clinton Is Lacking in the Art of Contact."

In Pamela George's case, it was not the fact that she was taking masculine-coded goods, but rather that she was all too circumscribed by Kummerfield and Ternowetsky's entitlements to her feminine-coded goods of affection and sex. Furthermore, her presumed inability to perform her feminine-coded duties—such as the requisite social, domestic, and reproductive labour—on account of her participation in sex work provided them with the grounds for enforcement of the patriarchal order. But let's be much clearer here, for Pamela George's murder, as the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls shows without question, is the result of a racialized misogyny. The presence of Pamela George's murder within a national epidemic of misogyny directed toward Indigenous women and girls follows precisely from Manne's argument that misogyny is not an individual's hatred, but rather the societal policing of particular women. As well, Manne's nuance between an understanding of misogyny as targeting all women, because they are women and instead a misogyny that targets particular kinds of women provides us an avenue to recognize the racially motivated misogyny of attacks on Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people, which in a racist society would otherwise go unrecognized.

Since we are creating an old concept anew (and of course never shaking the weight of its past) I am reminded that a philosophical concept is both something which must be invented and an entity that has the potential to *create*. Regarding the invention of the concept of misogyny, Wikipedia gives this honour to ancient Greek philosophy, where the term *misogunia* (μισογυνία) was used in a text called *On Marriage*, written by Antipator of Tarsus (c. 150).[36] As we know from chapter one, origin stories are both powerful and compelling. In fact, the ancient roots of

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[36] "Misogyny," in *Wikipedia*, accessed February 26, 2019, https://en.wikipedia.org/w/index.php?title=Misogyny&oldid=884583954.

misogyny have been central to the men's rights movement as it culminates in an alt-right online community known as "The Red Pill" (found at subreddit r /theredpill). The Red Pill espouses white supremacist and patriarchal ideologies and they use Greek and Roman texts to bolster their arguments.[37] In *Not all Dead White Men,* Donna Zuckerberg explores the enterprise of the Red Pill's commitment to quite nasty men's rights initiatives online and offline. Through a hermeneutics of ancient Greek and Roman texts, members of The Red Pill argue for the subordination of women as a natural truth.

In terms of the concept of misogyny's capacity to *create,* remember that in chapter one I used "love" as an example of a creative and multiplicitous concept, but philosophical concepts also include gloomier words like misogyny, hate, or transphobia and the very use of each of these words produces uniquely affective outputs. For example, in a Women and Gender Studies graduate seminar, naming something as "misogynist" draws on shared knowledge and creates a useful frame for a discussion about sexual violence against women, while use of misogyny in the title of a *New York Times* article about Hillary Clinton breeds defensiveness, anger, and vitriol from commenters. Just as the uptake of any concept is dependent upon its environment, that environment layers new and old reactions into the cultural imaginary that surrounds it. A key point to remember here is that for Deleuze and Guattari, concepts are always a response to a problem. The concept of love might be a response to the stirrings of heart and body, while the concept of sexism was a response to the problem of prejudice in workplaces, relationships, and social encounters. When it comes to misogyny, although the term's roots are in ancient Greece, the "concept," as it creates meaning in social and cultural contexts was not mobilized until

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[37] See Zuckerberg, *Not All Dead White Men*.

feminists took hold of the term and used it to conduct retroactive readings of any manner of historical texts.[38] In this vein, misogyny creates an understanding of gender-motivated and gender-based violence that exceeds the outputs that sexism affords. We might liken this to the difference between homophobia (fear of homosexuals) and homonegativity (negativity toward homosexuality), where the latter, though offering a valuable nuance to more concealed and institutionalized exclusions of lesbian, gay, bi, and queer people, doesn't result in the same sensational effect as the concept of homophobia.

We might also imagine the concept of misogyny as a response to the problem of women's containment, but just as the concept of misogynoir illustrates, sometimes the perceived problem can itself be short-sighted. The landscape of misogyny has tentacles that reach much further than from a heterosexual man towards a woman. In fact, one largely unexplored terrain of misogyny is in regard to queer communities. In one of few explorations, Hale and Odeja use Manne's logic of misogyny to look at gay male misogyny as directed at anyone (gay, lesbian, bi, trans) who occupies more feminine codes of expression, and in another, Julia Serano uses the term transmisogyny to refer to unique experiences of misogyny that trans female/feminine people experience as misogyny intersects with transphobia.[39] Serano argues that society's tremendous aversion to femininity is acted out ten-fold on trans women, while trans men, though victims of transphobia, are still able and allowed to access masculine privilege. Hale and Odeja further this point, demonstrating that "white gay male misogyny can function to reinforce a

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[38] On this tenuous origin story, Manne references a misogynist pamphlet written by Joseph Swetnam in 1615. It was the response of anonymous feminists that worked to transform the word from a "truth" to a problem. See *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 49; See also by Christine E. Hutchins, "In A Word: The True History of 'Misogyny,'" *On the Issues Magazine: A Magazine of Feminist, Progressive Thinking*, September 16, 2009, https://www.ontheissuesmagazine.com/2009summer/cafe2.php?id=63.

[39] Julia Serano, *Whipping Girl: A Transsexual Woman on Sexism and the Scapegoating of Femininity* (Emeryville, CA: Seal Press, 2007).

particular gender and racial hierarchy that continually confines queer femininities to the status of the *abject other*."[40] Importantly, they do away with the idea that an oppressed group cannot oppress, and really dig in to the apparatus of "heterosexuality and patriarchy" within gay male communities, which ensures the survival of misogynistic ideals by making "opposition to femininity an essential component of belonging."[41] It is easy to identify such oppositions within heterosexual communities (i.e. if heterosexual men do not display power over women, they risk being read as gay), but for gay men, masculinity and masc credentials are often just as coveted. Femininity represents every slur that was used against them in the schoolyard and feminine boys and men remain a huge source of anxiety for society as they represent both the contingency of gender and failures of a patriarchal empire to mold its men.[42]

Another import from chapter one's discussion of the living present is Bergson's concept of duration. As discussed above, thinking durationally involves a radical shift in the belief in causality between past and present, and instead indicates the co-existence of past, present, and future in the same moment. This means that if someone shouts a derogatory term to me on the street, I do not reason through its intention, determine its location within a sexist ideology, and then identify it as a misogynist term; I *feel* it. Past experiences contract with the anticipation of what might come next and so the present is layered with guarded movements, furtive glances for an exit, and de-escalation tactics.

We can think about misogyny's duration (and transmisogyny's duration as it is enacted in queer communities) through the frame of kinship and its contractions of a shared past (whether

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[40] Hale and Ojeda, "Acceptable Femininity? Gay Male Misogyny and the Policing of Queer Femininities," 310.
[41] Hale and Ojeda, 312.
[42] Hale and Ojeda, 315.

real or imagined). Hale and Ojeda talk about both the insidious and the community-building operations of kinship as a causal force in white gay male misogyny as it forges connections and relationships between men, and then primes the emotional bonds that keep them together. Reminiscent of Sedgwick's "homosocial desire," the duration of the deep bonds of kinship between men, homosexual or otherwise, could be understood to have a thick temporal *drag.* In *Time Binds,* Elizabeth Freeman describes "temporal drag" as the "retrogression, delay, and the pull of the past on the present."[43] She further discusses the process in relation to the history of lesbian feminism and the seeming drag it exerts on contemporary feminist and queer communities. In some cases, this drag is productive as it reminds the present to pay heed to the memories, experiences, and knowledges already formed. On the other hand, it can cause the past to stick in places where it should otherwise be open to change.

I have been witness to this temporal drag in many instances within my work within the LGBTQ2S community, and most recently, while working alongside eleven AIDS service organizations in a cross-Canada network. Within the network, I represented one of four organizations that were led by cisgender women and was the only queer woman in the group. The weighty kinship of the AIDS pandemic enacted a drag on our ability to work together on an initiative to develop an intervention aimed at men who have sex with men (MSM) and the referential groups of gay, bi, and trans men. This kinship dragged on our efforts to respond to a present climate of HIV transmission that looks very different than it used to. Rather than being something that impacts primarily gay men, in Saskatchewan trans women, heterosexual Indigenous women, and people who use injection drugs are most impacted by HIV. For the men

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[43] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1985); Freeman, *Time Binds*, 62.

involved, the temporal drag was pain, nostalgia, and loss, sensations that are important to the larger stories about our queer archive of trauma and how they inform our presents. Despite the value of these histories, for those of us on the outside, this drag made the past sticky; we were unable to weave the old story into a new present, which needed new methods of response. Ultimately it caused a great deal of distrust between members of the partnership, as well as several confrontations that were directly in line with Hale and Ojeda's reading of gay male misogyny as a mechanism of gender and racial hierarchy that casts femininity as the abject other.

Jack Halberstam has also written on the matter of MSM misogyny in relation to their experience attending the University of Michigan's "Gay Shame" conference in the early 2000s. Following a less than enjoyable experience as one of very few presenters that didn't identify as a cis, white "gay man" Halberstam identified what they describe as "white gay male hegemony." For Halberstam, much of this hegemony is bound to the history of gay shame and its relationship to an emotional reservoir of "shame, denial, and misrecognition" that informs the adult experiences of queer sexuality.[44] I want to side-step for a moment, as the "emotional reservoir" here is not that far off from Christopher Nealon's discussion of the cultural weight of queer artefacts, including the emotional and cultural pull that these materials have on queer communities of the present. Effectively, the actual past need not even be shared between individuals such that each has gone through the AIDS crisis themselves, but rather the thick virtual past that is part of the larger community is heavy in the air and becomes the connecting threads of community and recognition. Gay shame also tends to "universalize the subject formed from such a 'shame formation.'"[45] This means that a temporal drag operates on the contemporary

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[44] Judith Halberstam, "Shame and White Gay Masculinity," *Social Text* 23, no. 3–4 (2015): 221.
[45] Halberstam, 223.

gay male, such that his shame in part emerges from the "experience of being denied access to privilege."[46] White gay male misogyny, then, enacts a form of horizontal warfare that contracts a past of homophobia and discrimination, and anticipates a present where such threats are still intact.

Misogyny Sticks

Earlier in this chapter I described Clinton and Trump's timelines as static versus aberrant; and further I described Trump as having wings in the face of history, while Clinton had lead blocks on her feet. I meant both of these references to apply to the cultural memory of the American public such that Clinton has been tied to her past actions (for better or for worse in some cases) and Trump is able to leap above such accusations as sexual assault and harassment, cheating on his taxes, and lying about his businesses. I liken this effect to a temporal stickiness, whereupon Clinton's position as a white woman in a "man's" (political) game ties her to her past (and her body) and Trump's fluidity is thanks both to his identity position, but also to his effective refusal to let anything *stick* through various affective behaviours such as denial, laughter, outright lying, and the proliferation of information to bury something else.

This containment of the female body is a fundamental tactic of misogyny and its history goes deep into the metaphysical explorations of Western knowledge. When we think of *time*, *space*, *causation, reality,* we presume such metaphysical concepts are non-gendered, and yet, an *absence* of gender does not denote gender neutrality. In fact, the absence of gender often reveals an implicit phallocentrism within metaphysical tales as Western philosophy has long relied on

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[46] Halberstam, 223.

the myth of the neutral subject in order to bolster the masculine agent of time and meaning. As Simone de Beauvoir famously wrote in *The Second Sex*: “humanity is male” and thus, “man defines woman not in herself but relative to him.”[47] We can see this in the language around Hillary Clinton as news coverage often framed her in relation to the various men she was alongside and or up against (positioning which changed depending on the year). The American public willingly passed her from Bill Clinton to Barack Obama, and then to Donald Trump and such transfers exemplify Beauvoir’s statement that woman is “the incidental, the inessential as opposed to the essential.”[48]

Such castings of Clinton, or any woman for that matter, are often overlooked, deemed the product of socio-cultural factors over and above the stuff of meaning and mattering. However, when we dig into questions of identity, selfhood, and subjectivity, we cannot look away from Western civilization’s over-reliance on objectivity, which has meant that we do not trust the body (think of Zeno’s skepticism of the senses), and that our distrust runs deep. Such distrust is part of the dual function whereby: a) reason is privileged over the corporeal; and b) such privileging results in the relegation of women to the body or corporeal capacity. According to Aristotle, although women had some deliberative capacity, they were “by nature” inferior to men due to their lack of “maleness”: “Woman is as it were an infertile male; the female, in fact, is female on account of an inability of a sort, viz. It lacks the power to concoct semen out of the final state of nourishment because of the coldness of its nature.”[49] Woman’s menstrual coldness is understood as contrary to man’s seminal heat, and thus, women were unable to contribute the

[47] Simone de Beauvoir, *The Second Sex*, trans. H. M. Parshley (New York: Vintage Books, 1952), xxii.
[48] Beauvoir, xxii.
[49] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, n.d., 728a 13-27.

agential seed necessary for procreation, intelligence, and sovereignty.[50] For Aristotle, this mistrust rang of disgust such that woman is "as it were, a deformity" or an "incomplete male."[51] Twenty-four hundred years later, this disgust sticks to Clinton as Trump regularly relied on a language of disgust in his lashings. Examples that were picked up (and started by) the press involved obsessions with her health and representations of Clinton as "weak, frail, aging if not dying, and lacking in the necessary presidential (read masculine) stamina," as Manne documents.[52] Reporters were also obsessed with her bodily secretions, including sensationalizing any illness or cold and even fixating on what was believed to be a drool spot on her jacket during the first debate (and which was rather a shadow from her mic).

Aristotle's biological speculations have had longstanding impact on Western understandings of the body, particularly the (female) body's relationship to both rationality and *temporality*. In particular, Aristotle tells us in *Physics* that there can be no time without soul, for nothing but the soul is qualified to *count* and perceive of time.[53] Although Aristotle granted women the presence of a rational soul in Ancient Greece, he determined that women were prone to irrationality and not able to control themselves in the same way that men could. Further, women lacked the element of procreation that was able to create a *soul* in their offspring, only providing the materiality of life and not the essence.[54] This sleight-of-hand occurs repeatedly throughout Western philosophy as Aristotle's contemporaries wind together arguments

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[50] Aristotle, *Politics*, n.d., 1260a11.
[51] Aristotle, *Parts of Animals*, n.d., 775a, 12–16.
[52] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 259.
[53] Aristotle, *Physics*, 223a22.
[54] See Aristotle, Bk IV. Irigaray has provided one of the most succinct accounts of this apparatus within Aristotle's work, see Luce Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference* (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1993). Also see Mary K. Bloodsworth-Lugo, *In-Between Bodies: Sexual Difference, Race, and Sexuality* (New York: SUNY Press, 2007), 37–38 for a discussion of the passivity of the female in matters of time and of reproduction.

supporting the divide between matter and soul (or body and mind) and subsequently do very little to deny the link between man and the mind, over woman and the body (that is, if they are not altogether defending it!). Descartes no doubt strong-armed this divide through his famous claim: *I think therefore I am*, a dictum that relies on a distrust of bodily and sensory knowledge:

> On the one hand I have a clear and distinct idea of myself in so far as I am only a thinking and not an extended being, and since on the other hand I have a distinct idea of body in so far as it is only an extended being which does not think, it is certain that this 'I'—that is to say, my soul, by virtue of which I am what I am—is entirely and truly distinct from my body and that it can be or exist without it.[55]

Now, scholars have already spent thousands of pages discussing the misogyny of ancient philosophy, so I will not rehash a previously well-argued point, but suffice it to say that if we explore the lines that have been drawn between both body and mind and body and soul, it becomes clear that the female body has metaphorically and literally borne the brunt of this subordination.[56] Consequently, Luce Irigaray's famous dictum that man is "the subject, master of time, [and] the axis of the world's ordering" while woman is the passive material, still has a fierce grip.[57]

To view women as the passive material of culture is to limit their ability to be "masters" of their own fate, as well as to view them as absent from the "making of history." Often this has

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[55] Rene Descartes, *Meditations on the First Philosophy*, trans. Laurence J. Lafleur (New York: Macmillan/Library of the Liberal Arts, 1951), Med. VI.

[56] See Michèle Le Doeuff, *The Philosophical Imaginary* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 2002); Le Doeuff, *Hipparchia's Choice: An Essay Concerning Women, Philosophy, Etc.*; Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*; Tuana, *Woman and the History of Philosophy*; Moira Gatens, *Feminism and Philosophy: Perspectives on Difference and Equality* (Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 1991); Moller Okin, *Women in Western Political Philosophy*; Elizabeth V. Spelman, *Inessential Woman: Problems of Exclusion in Feminist Thought* (Boston, MA: Beacon Press, 1988); Luce Irigaray, *This Sex Which Is Not One*, trans. Catherine Porter (Ithica: Cornell University Press, 1985); Lloyd, *The Man of Reason: Male and Female in Western Philosophy*.

[57] Irigaray, *An Ethics of Sexual Difference*, 7.

translated into a spatialization of women such that it is not just the case that women's bodies are more spatially policed (i.e. a woman is required to sit cross-legged, or reservedly so as not to "take up space" whereas men are socialized to spread out as an expression of assertiveness and self-confidence) but that space itself is deemed the feminine landscape on which the masculine constructs of culture, civilization, and reason are built.[58]

Explored most prolifically in postcolonial feminist literature, concepts such as "nation" or "country" are often feminized, indicating bodies to be discovered and colonized. In fact, colonial countries have been well aware that the key to assimilation is to conquer—metaphorically and literally—the colonized country's women so as to ensure the successful development of a new nation.[59] In his 2002 State of the Union Address George W. Bush commented on the United States' role in bringing freedom to Afghan women: "the last time we met in this chamber, the mothers and daughters in Afghanistan were captives in their homes, forbidden from working or going to school. Today women are free, and are part of Afghanistan's new government."[60] This statement was laughable given numerous comments from the Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA) regarding the ongoing oppression experienced by women in Afghanistan, and in particular, the role that American troops continued to play in maintaining

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[58] See Moira Gatens, "Power, Bodies, and Difference," in *The Continental Feminism Reader*, ed. Ann Cahill and Jennifer Hansen (Rowman & Littlefield, 2003), 258–275; Janet Price and Margrit Shildrick, eds., *Feminist Theory and the Body: A Reader* (New York: Routledge, 2017). The latter provides an extensive outline of the way that the female body is circumscribed by spatial and naturalist metaphors. See especially their introduction "Openings on the Body: A Critical Introduction," 1-14 and Shildrick's "Mapping the Colonial Body: Sexual Economies and the State in Colonial India," 388-398.

[59] Joyce P. Kaufman and Kristen P. Williams, *Women, the State, and War: A Comparative Perspective on Citizenship and Nationalism* (New York: Lexington Books, 2007); Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*; Enloe, "Feminism, Nationalism, and Militarism: Wariness without Paralysis."

[60] George W Bush, "The President's State of the Union Address" (January 29, 2002), https://www.ssa.gov/history/gwbushstmts2.html#1.

this oppression through their support for an unjust Afghani government.[61] Instead, Bush's comments serve as concrete example of the ways that American neoliberalism relies on narratives of Afghani women as spatialized, a-historical, underdeveloped, and, most problematically, *in desperate need of time's intervening arrow.* This intervention is required in order to maintain a story about Afghanistan and many other locations in the global south as outside of a progress-based timelines and thus beholden to a Western savior.

In response, RAWA argued that their feminist movement did not need help from the US, especially not in the form of "bombs and military occupation," nor in terms of bringing about a Western political system. They worked to reveal that the American project of bringing Afghan women to a "present" and "Western" standard of women's liberation acted as justification for an unjust war.[62] Bush's further claim that "America will always stand firm for the non-negotiable demands for human dignity: the rule of law; limits on the power of the state; respect for women" then formulated women's rights as part of the central tenets of American culture, and mandated the distinct American values of dignity, the rule of law, and democracy as the values that should be held by all and forced upon those outside of America.[63]

The homonationalism and neocolonialist framework relies on the forceful anticipation of the future as a means by which to demarcate the present and laugh at the past. In the months and years after September 11th, 2001, George W. Bush ensured that America's neocolonialist agenda

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[61] See website: "Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA)," accessed March 15, 2018, http://www.rawa.org/index.php for news briefs and documents outlining their reactions to, and sustained disapproval of, American interference in Afghanistan.
[62] See RAWA's statement on October 7, 2008 where they open with "Seven years back the US government and its allies were successfuly able to legitimize their military invasion on Afghanistan and deceive the people of the US and the world under the banners of "liberating Afghan women," "democracy," and "war on terror": Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), "RAWA's Statement on the Seventh Anniversary of the US Invasion of Afghanistan," www.rawa.org, October 7, 2008, http://www.rawa.org/events/sevenyear_e.htm.
[63] Bush, "The President's State of the Union Address."

reached Afghanistan in full force, bequeathed under the guise of extending human rights to those without. And of course, the women of RAWA were clear agents in their own right:

> Our freedom is only achievable at the hands of our people. It is the duty of all the intellectuals, all the democratic forces and progressive and independence-seeking people to rise in a constant and decisive struggle for independence and democracy by taking the support of our wounded people as the independent force, against the presence of the US and its allies.[64]

As happens again and again, the self-determination of the women of RAWA was overwritten by Western liberalism's claim on their emancipation. This was a hero's journey to pin a flag on a nation and it never strayed from a framing woman as the passive material of culture. From a Western frame, the story is so often told linearly, such that there is a past where human rights are absent→ the hero swoops in as saviour→ the country is emancipated and lives on with newfound freedom. Of course this is a terribly retroactive, cause and effect frame which overwrites all of the complexities of social change, including the narratives and voices that exceed and contradict this progressive tale. History is never "clean" in this way, it is only ever sanitized by our storytelling, but the messiness of experience, memory, and experience *stick*.

In a different, though not unrelated example, Himani Bannerji makes explicit the neocolonialist agenda of multiculturalism and diversity platforms in Canada, such that they can be understood as part of an ideological state apparatus that works to deflate anti-racist movements by blanketing the nation with a seemingly "value-free, power neutral indicator of

[64] Revolutionary Association of the Women of Afghanistan (RAWA), "RAWA's Statement on the Seventh Anniversary of the US Invasion of Afghanistan."

difference and multiplicity."[65] In order to do so, this apparatus rearranges issues of social justice, structural racism, and unemployment into a frame of cultural diversity focused on religious freedom and symbols of ethnicity, therefore "freezing" Canadian immigrants within an atemporal frame of social conservativism and tradition. Here we are reminded of earlier conversations about a static temporality as a mechanism of misogyny. In its enforcement of a patriarchal, and in these cases, Western Imperialist order, misogyny requires its targets to stay contained within a fixed temporal frame. Tradition, of course, is invoked as the guiding principle for feminine-coded goods and the discursive tactics that limit women in the global south to frames of powerlessness and dependency demonstrate precisely that misogyny and racism are inseparable.[66]

George Bush's warmongering and Bannerji's discussion of the Canadian apparatus of multiculturalism demonstrate the logic of misogyny present in the spatialization and objectification of women of colour, including their abstraction from the timeline of history. This is a misogyny that contains women as an object of conquest and control, rather than subjects in their own right. However, there are always cracks in the concrete, and I have deliberately included RAWA's own public statements within this discussion as a means of ensuring that we hear the voice of the impacted group and not only their subjugation to Bush's neoliberal agenda. This method responds to the thesis from Gayatri Spivak's pivotal article, "Can the Subaltern Speak?" that such vocalizations of the experiences of women and others in the global south should not come from the West (even in the way that I have retold a story from a Western perspective). But alongside this thesis, is Spivak's question as to whether such a discourse is

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[65] Himani Bannerji, *Dark Side of the Nation: Essays on Multiculturalism, Nationalism, and Gender* (Toronto: Canadian Scholars' Press, 2000), 35.
[66] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 91.

even possible, as given the current parameters surrounding postcolonial discourse, any space that is made for the subaltern to speak, ends up assuming a homogenous voice.[67] Likewise, we can see the diffraction pattern of this postcolonial discourse as it plays out in the media coverage of Pamela George, or other murdered and missing Indigenous women. Misogyny has gained power precisely as a result of its erasure of the voices of its victims and its refusal of any space in which they can *speak*.

I will return to a discussion of the "voice" of the subaltern in the next section of this chapter, but before moving on, I do want to ensure that I am not casting space or places as negative entities, given the fact that the histories of racialized peoples are often histories of movement, forced migration, and diaspora. Such experiences are thus tied both to mobility and quite deeply to space and place. In the opening pages to *Migrant Sites,* Dalia Kandiyoti takes up this link, writing that though the tendency within diaspora studies has been to use space merely as a metaphor, or as representative of an "absence" there is a need to explore the spatially situated experiences and knowledges that frame migration. Kandiyoti writes, "because displaced subjects carry with them narratives of their originary places, stories of eviction from place often constitute the core of their cultural and literary identities" and further "the places of *re*settlement, whose representations articulate with representations of class, race, gender, and sexuality, also form diaspora identities, practices and narratives."[68] This means that if we read the homonationalist critique of marriage equality that I spoke of very briefly in chapter one

[67] The subaltern is related to the concept of the Other, though it is also defined as being wholly outside established structures of culture, and consequently denied access to both speech-oriented and political forms of representation. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak, "Can the Subaltern Speak?," in *Colonial Discourse and Post-Colonial Theory*, ed. Patrick Williams and Laura Chrisman (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993), 67–111.
[68] Dalia Kandiyoti, *Migrant Sites: America, Place, and Diaspora Literatures* (Hanover and London: University Press of New England, 2009), 4.

alongside this redress of the spaces and places of migration, there is an opening into a spatio-temporal reading which need not extract temporal terms such as flows, border-crossing, and movement from the significance of land, environment, and place.

Rather than writing off space and even spatialization as problematic, then, this nuance extends to our discussion of the time of misogyny (and the time of queer bodies as the next chapter will show) as it illustrates that although I have drawn attention to Western philosophy's history of objectifying women and thus relegating women's subjectivity to the corporeal, the answer is not to abstract woman from place, but rather to draw the materiality of power, colonialism, and misogyny into the discussion. This contraction, as has been shown, illustrates that neocolonialism serves as a misogynist enforcement of Western patriarchy, femininity remains an abject other within white gay male communities, and that violence against Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people is fueled by a misogyny that functions because it is also a racism, and not on its own.

The difficulty, however, is that in discussions of the time of misogyny, it is hard to avoid the anticipatory regime in which our expectations in the present create an expected future. Discussions of misogyny's existence make it all the more visible and widespread, we see it everywhere (because it is everywhere), we assume it is without end. Within this gap, I recognize that the "time of misogyny" is its function as the drumstick that James Williams uses to explain the contraction and anticipation of the living present. As the drumstick hits the skin of the drum, it rearranges the particles of sand representing past and future, and in so doing remakes the timeline with every rhythmic beat. By thinking about misogyny through this metaphor I mean to draw attention to our stories and discussions of misogyny—our literal use of the term in speech and writing—and to say that we need to amplify and expand these stories so that the concept is

invoked in all cases where it is needed. I also mean that present contractions of misogyny reveal the heavy weight of the term, including its canonization in our Western education systems and its global reach into countries and nations. I hope as well that the time of misogyny is one where we can contract and expand our understandings of violence against Indigenous women in Saskatchewan, the rape and murder of women in acts of war, feelings of disgust over Hillary Clinton's bodily functions, or the exclusion of trans women from trans exclusionary radical feminist (TERF) spaces. Thus, to close this chapter, I look ahead. That is, I imagine a future that is different from the present, while drawing on a thick temporal past of a concept that is yet to come.

What to Make of Misogyny's Future?

Despite there being an upsurge of texts about misogyny, very few offer ameliorative steps forward (or backward), such that it still feels as though misogyny is throwing its weight around as the concept that no one wants to claim responsibility for (both its perpetration and its repair). I have relied heavily on Kate Manne's logic of misogyny as it provides us with tools to point out instances of misogyny that have already had powerful impact, but Manne closes her text with a bleak story about the lack of response to the misogyny that is around us. Identifying Trump's election to the presidency as a culmination of the misogyny present in American society, she writes that:

> You might think [people across America] who likewise lament the result would now be waking up to the power of misogyny to distort our moral and rational judgements. You might think they would be willing to say mea culpa, inasmuch as many attacked Hillary Clinton relentlessly, viciously, disproportionately, misleadingly, moralistically, and

> sometimes, in my view, self-indulgently. But you would be wrong: this has largely not happened.[69]

As the next two chapters of this dissertation will also demonstrate, it is at this juncture (the supposed stillness, or lack of action; our "frozenness" in the face of a problem) that the living present provides fertile ground and to this end I enlist two temporal frames as very brief efforts to think misogyny's future (or lack thereof, if we could only imagine).

The first frame is from *The Tipping Point* by Malcom Gladwell and the second is from *Living a Feminist Life* by Sarah Ahmed. In his popular culture text Gladwell tells several stories about those moments when an idea or trend tipped over the edge and became a phenomenon. One example he uses is the return to popularity of Hush Puppies, the classic loafer of the mid twentieth century. In 1994, when the company was debating going out of business, a few hipsters in New York city suddenly started wearing Hush Puppies again. The convergence of timing (Hush Puppies were old enough to be "cool" again), influence (they were endorsed by style-savvy young adults of Manhattan), and stickiness (they stood out in their classic simplicity) meant that the company's sales sky-rocketed and a whole new era of Hush Puppies hit the shelves. We have seen such a tipping occur in relation to the 2017 Women's March movement, which is estimated to have resulted in over 7 million participants worldwide. In this case, it is clear that Trump's inauguration ceremony on January 20th tipped the scales as it preceded the Washington Women's March and hundreds of concurrent marches, however, the urgency was felt not only because of the inauguration ceremony, but from more than a year and a half of

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[69] Manne, *Down Girl: The Logic of Misogyny*, 283.

watching the American election campaign and listening to Donald Trump espouse racist, misogynist, and homophobic ideologies on a daily basis.

Now, the temporality of the tipping point is not necessarily that we are looking for an origin story. Instead, the tipping point is the moment when we see the potentialities of a shifting feminist landscape. This shift can be illustrated in the redefinition of misogyny that I have discussed at length in this chapter, whereby if misogyny is a concept that exists in the mind of a man and is directed toward women, subsequent investigations will rely on questions of intent, or pre-meditation (i.e. "how long have you hated women?" "did you plan out your attack" "Is it all women or just this woman?"). Such a model relies on a causal story about motives and intention while it erases the actual victim from the story. A definition of misogyny as the societal policing of gender shifts the frame to recognize that "agents do not have a monopoly on the social meaning of their actions," and thus that a misogynist word or deed has affective uptake beyond an individual.[70] To see such gender-based violence bubble up in the actions of one person, then, illustrates that Trump is just the tip of the iceberg; he is both the indicator of a wealth of societal problems and he is the pendulum as it swings over the edge. This durational reading shines a light on the many words and deeds that serve as enforcing or policing activities, whether these are the products of individuals or the product of government policies, international development, or online communities.

To say that we are at the tipping point of misogyny is to see both that the concept is coming into much greater focus, and that its enforcement contracts thousands of years of memories, stories, and terror. This encounter is also with the iceberg below the surface as

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[70] Manne, 61.

through readings such as Manne's we are able to parse misogyny's jagged edges much more easily: i.e. we can see its reach throughout all arms of a patriarchal society and its enforcement by way of foreign policy, the objectification of not just women, but entire nations, and the intense racism that props up continued acts of murder and violence toward Indigenous women, girls, and Two Spirit people. Though this may reveal much more than we want to see, the process of revelation has the companion effect of unearthing misogyny's pervasiveness and making much more visible its institutionalization within Western political, social, and cultural systems. It is with this breadth that a concept of misogyny has "tipped" into public parlance, but we are still dancing on the edge of its full vocalization.

Returning to the voice of the subaltern for a moment, Spivak's response to the question of whether or not the subaltern can speak is a resounding *no*, as she originally wrote in 1988. But we must remember that this is in the context of a postcolonial terrain that is still framed by colonial discourse, and as Lorde's famous quotation states *the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house.*[71] For Spivak (and Lorde), the voices of the subaltern must come from a place that is *outside* of these normative models, hence, the subaltern can, in fact, speak, *she must just use a different language*. It is this old adage that has renewed force in the present as it reminds us of the power of language from the margins; or as bell hooks calls it, a "space of radical openness."[72] hooks writes "I have been working to change the way I speak and write, to incorporate in the manner of telling a sense of place, of not just who I am in the present but where I am coming from, the multiple voices within me."[73] The lived experiences of

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[71] Audre Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House," in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984).
[72] Trinh T. Minh-Ha, *Elsewhere, Within Here* (London: Routledge, 2010); bell hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," *Framework* 36 (1989): 15–23.
[73] hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness," 16.

misogyny/misogynoir/transmisogyny require space to be heard, and not in spaces that are delineated by a patriarchal agenda. This is the tipping point that opens up to a future where vocalizations such as #metoo and the worldwide networking of the Women's March take up space in a new time and a new language.

To turn then to Sarah Ahmed's rich offerings in *Living a Feminist Life* I again draw in her claim that feminism is sensational, in that, as feminists, we often "register something [as wrong, as inappropriate] in the sharpness of an impression" and what we come up against.[74] We often think of those moments of "coming up against" as only the violence, the outbursts, the wrongs, but I want to stretch this sensational feminism to those events and experiences that are coded as powerful, positive, and as moments of social change. Such events have just as much affective uptake and maybe even more if we make them "sticky," that is, write them down, tell them to others, and ensure that they become part of the cultural and emotional landscape. For example, after returning home from the women's March in Saskatoon I remember paging through Facebook stories and photos, and crying huge and messy tears alone in my kitchen. I tell this story often because I want it to add to the affective power of the movement; I want it to become a repeated memory-made-habit so that I can't think of the women's march movement without also feeling the powerful chills of that first day.

In a similar vein, my last story about misogyny returns to *Walking with our Sisters* and its exhibition at Saskatchewan's Wanuskewin Heritage Park from October 31st to November 21st, 2014. I remember walking through the artefacts and feeling the haunting of all who were referenced in their absence and as I roll this memory around in my mind today, I am reminded of

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[74] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 22.

the sacred fire that accompanied the exhibit. As per ceremonial practices, the fire was lit at the opening ceremonies on October 30th, 2014 and was stoked throughout the entire duration of the exhibit. In many Indigenous communities in Canada, and within the five Indigenous language groups in Saskatchewan (Cree, Dakota, Dene, Nakota, and Saulteaux), the sacred fire is a "doorway to the spirit world where anyone may communicate with the Creator, ancestors, and spirits."[75] The sacred fire is also a site of healing and when the National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls travelled to different sites in its collection of stories and experiences, it was always accompanied by the lighting of a sacred fire. The fire was maintained by volunteers until the hearings ended and then allowed to go out naturally. In its Saskatoon residency, volunteer men from the community tended to the sacred fire for *Walking with our Sisters* day and night in a gift of time that contracts centuries of storytelling and ceremony. This too becomes an affective narrative, as it illustrates a new/old response to an old/new problem. For many Indigenous communities, ceremony is a first response, while for many Western communities, it is unfamiliar. In both cases the ceremonial exhibit activates conversations and sensations that are very different from those activated by rallies and marches: it uses silence and absence while rallies enlist noise and presence. In a movement that needs all hands on deck, both strategies draw powerful sensations, thus creating a growing feminist memory of our bodies-in-motion in all pasts and all futures.

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[75] See Tom Fennario, "Healing by the Sacred Fire," *APTN News*, December 3, 2017, https://aptnnews.ca/2017/12/03/healing-by-the-sacred-fire/; "Sacred Fire Burns Around the Clock for MMIWG National Inquiry," *CTV News*, November 22, 2017, https://saskatoon.ctvnews.ca/sacred-fire-burns-around-the-clock-for-mmiwg-national-inquiry-1.3690233; Tanya Talaga, "The Importance and Lessons of the Sacred Fire at the Inquiry in Whitehorse | The Star," *The Toronto Star*, May 31, 2017, https://www.thestar.com/news/canada/2017/05/31/the-importance-and-lessons-of-the-sacred-fire-at-the-inquiry-in-whitehorse.html.

As I reflect on the sensation of *Walking With our Sisters* five years later, I anticipate a different future for misogyny. Rather than one focused on instances and events, it is a lived experience of centering the victims within the stories that we tell and taking accountability, as settlers and Indigenous people, for reframing the narrative. The *Walking With our Sisters* vamps have been travelling across Canada since 2013, and every visit has inevitably done the kind of sensational work that I experienced in my entangled encounter in Saskatoon. This is where the archive, acts of memorialization, and creative responses to trauma and pain do crucial work in terms of rolling concepts around and making them "sweaty" as Ahmed describes them. Sweaty concepts are not made through contemplation, but through their unfolding as the everyday matter of life.[76] Misogyny is a sweaty concept as it contracts in our bodies, and consequently our theorization and engagement with it, unfolds from such contractions. As creative lines of flight, concepts bring new/old things into the world and as I have worked to demonstrate, the concept of misogyny brings, not only intersectional specificity, clarity of intent and attack, but also movement and transformation. Our accountability to the concept, then, is to intensify it in our communities. To determine its nuance and difference in various settings, and to share that it is both so much more pervasive and so much more specific than our history books have told us. We may be knee deep in the thick time of misogyny, but this does not mean it will be our future.

[76] Ahmed, *Living a Feminist Life*, 13.

THREE

Queering Time: “An Erratic and Uneasy Becoming”

> Queer time is a bushwhacked path, a sled’s shaky trail, a web of continual reinvention in many different directions.
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> —Lila, “The Pace of Queer Time”

I came out when I was nineteen. But I have been coming out ever since. Now seventeen years later, I still tell a coming out story. I remember the day, I remember the phrases I used. I remember breathing in nervously as I sat on the stairs of that well-worn wooden deck. *And yet,* that moment, the one I have marked as *the* event was not my first utterance of a queer self. It was neither the most difficult, nor the most vulnerable. It was just one event among many others, events which occurred before, after, and an event which is occurring right now.

In an interview with Raymond Bellour and François Ewald, Gilles Deleuze declaratively states that the *event*, used as a philosophical concept is “the only one capable of ousting the verb ‘to be.’”[1] The coming out *event* enacts precisely this movement: it is less an utterance of a queer self, of *being* queer, than it is a *becoming*, and as a becoming, the event is a doorway into

Lila, “The Pace of Queer Time,” Autostraddle, March 16, 2016, https://www.autostraddle.com/the-pace-of-queer-time-329459/.

[1] Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, 1997, 141.

understanding the living present as it forms and frames our lived experiences of sexuality, gender, and desire. In recent years, we have seen a proliferation of identity categories such as pansexual, demisexual, aromantic, gender fluid, genderqueer, ace, polysexual, demi-gender, and many others. This proliferation really does seem to mobilize the "thousand tiny sexes" that Deleuze and Guattari, as well as Grosz called for so many years ago and in order to really benefit from the multiplicity of becoming *otherwise*, we would hope that none of these identity categories solidified around subjects.[2] We hope that they would remain open and changing as they continued to contract and expand through new experiences, lovers, expressions, and needs. Unfortunately this isn't often the case. Within queer communities we continue to fight for rights to medical care, rights for legal partnerships, and equitable representation in social and public society, and within many of these frames, reliance on the queer *being*, or *subject*, still feels (and is) very necessary to our political, cultural, and social aims. Taking up these two different approaches (an identity-based approach versus an approach that foregrounds gender and sexual fluidity), legal scholar Carlos Ball makes an argument for the latter:

> As LGBT movement leaders and constituents ponder which objectives to pursue next, they should consider advocating for other reforms that delink the allocation of rights and benefits from the way individuals identify according to gender and sexuality. [This] would make it possible for a greater number of individuals, if they so wish, to explore a wider range of gender and sexual identities. They would also make it possible for individuals, if they so wish, to transition back and forth between different identities.[3]

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[2] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*; Elizabeth Grosz, "A Thousand Tiny Sexes: Feminism and Rhizomatics," *Topoi* 12, no. 2 (1993): 167–179.

[3] Carlos A. Ball, "A New Stage for the LGBT Movement: Protecting Gender and Sexual Multiplicities," in *After Marriage Equality: The Future of LGBT Rights* (NYU Press, 2016), 176.

Unfortunately, the "choice" is not often made on the part of the movement leaders and constituents, but rather the policy- and law-makers. In fact, Ball's point reverberates through a policy change within the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code in 2014. Despite clear arguments from individuals and community organizations to include gender expression as protected grounds, alongside gender identity, the Saskatchewan Human Rights Commission only included gender identity.[4] In the years since 2014, every province that underwent similar legislation change included both gender identity and expression as protected grounds, as did the federal government on June 19th, 2017 (Bill C-16). Today Saskatchewan is one of only three provinces and territories that does not include gender expression (alongside Manitoba and the Northwest Territories). By not including gender expression, Saskatchewan's Human Rights Commission aligned more with a rights-based discourse dependent upon particular categories instead of providing protections that extend to more fluid and transitive expressions of gender.

The coming out event is a unique occurrence within this terrain, as it is both a performative enactment and a pre-weighted confession within a specific cultural and social context. Coming out is always already marked as an utterance of *being* and our fixation on the coming out event, coupled with this formation, ensures that it serves as a rite of passage, a boundary making practice that forms the before and after, and the lines between gay and straight, bi and queer, trans and cis, self and other. When I uttered the words "I'm gay" I located myself as a disparate point in relation to the matrix of compulsory heterosexuality and forever changed the place I occupy in the world.[5] Like my use of misogyny in chapter two, my use of the coming

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[4] Chelle Matthews, Rachel Loewen Walker, and Miki Mappin, "Policy Recommendation: Toward the Inclusion of Gender Identity and Expression as Protected Grounds in the Saskatchewan Human Rights Code" (Saskatoon, SK: The Avenue Community Centre for Gender and Sexual Diversity, 2014).

[5] Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Women: Sex and Sexuality* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631–60.

out narrative here is directly connected to its passé status within queer theory and philosophy, while at the same time, the coming out event continues to have large uptake within the media, social sciences, and within observations of the views of my peers, colleagues, and those who access services at OUTSaskatoon.[6] I sense, then, that coming out is also enacting a bit of the temporal drag that we discussed in chapter two. Despite it's having been criticized as a boundary-making politic within queer theory (as we will see below), it is a prevailing narrative in queer and trans cultures and subcultures. Coming out is a story (and not a monolithic one) that we tell about ourselves, our relationships, our worlds, and in so doing it adds to the systems of knowledge that in turn make queer bodies and subjects.

As the second of three timescapes, this chapter moves from the living present of a concept (misogyny) to the living present of (many) lived (queer) bodies.[7] The living present provides an apparatus through which to explore queer politics without identity—queer and trans subjects without progress-narratives—and to look at queer subjects (all subjects) as only and ever the product of material temporalities. Jasbir Puar calls these assemblages, writing that "queerness is not an identity nor an anti-identity, but an assemblage that is spatially and temporally contingent"; Gloria Anzuldua calls it a river, a process which "needs to flow, to change to stay a river—if it stopped it would be a contained body of water such as a lake or a

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[6] Michael Lovelock, "'My Coming out Story': Lesbian, Gay and Bisexual Youth Identities on YouTube," *International Journal of Cultural Studies* 22, no. 1 (2019): 70–85; Julia Golda Harris, "Without Closets: A Queer and Feminist Re-Imagining of Narratives of Queer Experience" (Oberlin College, 2014); Lal Zimman, "'The Other Kind of Coming out': Transgender People and the Coming out Narrative Genre," *Gender & Language* 3, no. 1 (May 2009): 53–80; Alex Wilson, "N'tacimowin Inna Nah'," *Canadian Woman Studies* 26, no. 3/4 (2008): 193–99.

[7] As I indicated in the prologue, I have found Viviane Namaste's article "Undoing Theory: The 'Transgender Question' and the Epistemic Violence of Anglo-American Feminist Theory," *Hypatia* 24, no. 3 (2009): 11–31 particularly inspiring on a number of fronts, not the least of which includes its over-arching argument that feminist research and theory has often failed to involve the lived experiences of those it purports to address.

pond," and I call them time-bodies.[8] My engagement overlaps with these scholars, at the same time that it overlaps with a journalist from *Autostraddle*, Dory from *Finding Nemo*, and focus group participants talking about being Two Spirit. I have thus used blogs, movies, stories from my own life, and community-based research in my analysis and have drawn out the personal anecdotes of some of the scholars referenced in this chapter (Jack Halberstam and Gayle Salamon). Though this approach may stretch the category "philosophy," it supports my thesis that being is a multiple, non-specious, becoming. As time-bodies, we are embedded in the thick temporalities of the worlds which we inhabit and this embeddedness is the instigator for knowledge, ethics, culture, *life*.

This is part of the work of stretching "a thousand tiny sexes" backwards and forwards in ways that *dis*-identify, and *de*-stabilize the queer subject and in many ways, this chapter's deep dive into the living and becoming of queer lives has been my question all the way back to my undergraduate work. Given my more recent experiences with queer community work and the rapidly changing language at a local LGBTQ2S Community Centre, I would say that this digs into some of the most important queer issues of our time: *How do we balance the legitimating force of identity with the creativity and self-determination of our practices of giving account of oneself? How do we tell stories which resist rather than restrict? And how do we live queer lives that make more than history, but rather make new and undetermined futures?*

I take up these questions alongside the rich and varied scholarship on queer time, including scholarship on queer space as it intersects with the entangled space-time of a living present. Then, in order to discuss the thick time of (queer) presents, I return to the coming out

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[8] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, 91; Gloria Anzaldua, "To(o) Queer the Writer—Loca, Escritora y Chicana," in *The Gloria Anzaldúa Reader*, by Gloria Anzaldua, ed. AnaLouise Louise Keating et al. (Duke University Press, 2009), 166.

event in its complicated productivity and its limitations. As a framing narrative, coming out enacts the creative self-determination of giving an account of oneself, while on the other hand it belies a monomythic narrative of overcoming inauthenticity and both of these are important to subjectivation. With this chapter, I also acknowledge that the field of queer temporality studies is a busy place, and so as indicated above, I draw in the concept of the time-body or the Deleuzian (non) subject, as an embodied time-maker, and also a recipient of the temporal worlding of other time-bodies. Through this thick queer time, we are better able to explore the nuances of lives lived and lives told by gender and sexually diverse people, including the role we all play in the making of novel (queer) futures.

QUEERING SPACE/TIME

> I would like to be able to attribute my turn to temporality to a rigorous reading of Freud, Marx, or Hegel, or better still Kant, or to a deep and powerful reading of queer history, but in fact most of my ideas come to me in less recognizably scholarly ways. . . . I am in a drag king club at 2:00 a.m. and the performances are really bad, and some kid comes onstage and just rips an amazing performance of Elvis or Eminem or Michael Jackson and the people in the club recognize why they are here, in this place at this time, engaged in activities that probably seem pointless to people stranded in hetero temporalities.
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> —J Jack Halberstam, "Theorizing Queer Temporalities"[9]

[9] Dinshaw et al., "Theorizing Queer Temporalities," 181.

As I discussed in the introduction to this dissertation, there has been a flurry of material in relation to queer temporalities—or as a freelance writer from the well-known feminist-queer online blog *Autostraddle* states: "queer theorists talk a lot about time. Or rather, queer theorists talk a lot about 'temporality,' which I understand as a pretentious way to say time."[10] This sentiment echoes Halberstam's quote above as each reminds us that although the philosophy of time is dense and complex, *time* is one of the most intimate things we will ever know. To bring up the topic of *time* is to inspire a chorus of eager and interested voices all singing a shared refrain in twelve part harmony. We know time because we fight it and revel in it every single day. We race time, we luxuriate in time, we cry over time, laugh over time. Not a *moment goes by* that is beyond the reach of time's thick net and so easily, we are captivated by *time* and all its curiosities of future-past-present, yesterday-today-tomorrow. As discussed in the introduction, queer temporalities have also included and been accompanied by a large chorus of feminist, transnational, and crip theorists working on questions of teleology, metaphysics, ontology, and ethics. In fact, in 2007, *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* featured a double issue on queer temporalities, demonstrating its rising popularity—though failing to really trace what's been exciting about this field save for a rich roundtable discussion between many of the genres' key scholars.[11] Today, queer temporalities expand well beyond the academy as various queer writers, bloggers, and artists are taking their own bites out of the topic, but curiously, there is a wealth of scholarship on *queer geographies and spaces* that came just before the proliferation of scholarship on queer *time*.[12] In fact, my own obsession with time started with an interest in

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[10] Lila, "The Pace of Queer Time."
[11] Dinshaw et al., "Theorizing Queer Temporalities."
[12] See Elizabeth Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space* (London: MIT Press, 2001); Gordon Brent Ingram, Anne-Marie Bouthillette, and Yolanda Retter, *Queers in Space: Communities, Public Places, Sites of Resistance* (Bay Press, 1997); hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness";

architecture and spatiality (*just a pretentious way to say space, as Lila from Autostraddle might say*), and I explored texts on space and embodiment as they accomplished the necessary work of reframing and reclaiming queer spaces within the time of gentrification and progress.[13] If we are to trace the theoretical move from space to temporality within queer and feminist philosophies, we can imagine that in many respects, this move is recuperative (making up for heteronormative and patriarchal absences), but it must also be cumulative (these shifts are layered, much like we layered various enforcements of misogyny as they impact Indigenous women, nations in the global south threatened by American Imperialism, and white women in politics).

Today, time and temporality are much sexier than space and place, though no more important in an entangled spatio-temporal frame. Of course, time is material as well, but it is much easier to let our feet slip off the ground when talking about time than it is when we are talking about the physical spaces, objects, textures, and sounds that envelope us in lived space. We do well to explore the spatial wake of queer temporalities as they provide some of the thickening agents for our queer timelines, and in fact when thinking about queer space, just as Halberstam's epigraph reveals, I am similarly more inspired by the random ruptures of lived experience, memory, and movement, as I have enlisted such anecdotes throughout this work.

I am reminded of a night, nearly fifteen years ago, when some friends and I darted into an unmarked alley in a small prairie city and scanned the side buildings looking for the local gay

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Dereka Rushbrook, "Cities, Queer Space, and the Cosmopolitan Tourist," *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 8, no. 1/2 (2002); Nancy Duncan, "Renegotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private Spaces," in *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Duncan (London & New York: Routledge, 1996); David Bell et al., *Pleasure Zones: Bodies, Cities, Spaces* (Syracuse University Press, 2001); Wayne Myslik, "Renegotiating the Social/Sexual Identities of Places: Gay Communities as Safe Havens or Sites of Resistance?," in *Bodyspace: Destabilizing Geographies of Gender and Sexuality*, ed. Nancy Duncan (London & New York: Routledge, 1996).

[13] Rachel Loewen Walker, "Toward a FIERCE Nomadology: Contesting Queer Geographies on the Christopher Street Pier," *PhaenEx* 6, no. 1 (2011): 90–120.

bar. There was a tiny rainbow flag projecting out over an unmarked door about halfway down the alley and it guided us through the darkness. We were too early to be greeted by the usual crowd of smokers, but we could feel the energy of the raucous crowd that would later fill the space with shouts and laughter. We were in pursuit of *Diva's,* the local gay bar in Saskatoon, Saskatchewan—which, in 2019, is still only able to be entered by way of a back alley entrance (though today, the entrance is adorned by a light-up rainbow sign, and its back-alley status is much less a precaution than it is a throwback). Like the "gay bar" of any city, *Diva's* is a unique environment and it occupies a cultural role that regularly swings between transgressive and capitalist, subaltern and normative, spectacle and liberatory. It shows us that *space is never neutral*, and further that as spaces of alternate social and sexual orderings, *queer spaces* are evolutionary sites, or what we may call "heterotopias."[14]

Foucault first used the term "heterotopia" in the preface to *The Order of Things* in 1966.[15] Discussing the difference between heterotopic and utopic languages, Foucault noted that while utopic languages "run with the very grain of language" and permit tidy narratives, fables and discourses, heterotopias undermine language by destroying the patterns and knowledges that we use to construct meaning.[16] Foucault cites Jorge Louis Borges' *Other Inquisitions* as an example of heterotopic language where Borges quotes a Chinese Encyclopedia that divides animals into various and illogical categories including: a) belonging to the Emperor; b) embalmed; d) sucking pigs; e) sirens; f) fabulous; i) frenzied; k) drawn with a very fine camelhair brush; and m) having

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[14] Michel Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," trans. Jay Miskowiec, *Architecture/Mouvement/Continuité*, 1984, 1–9.
[15] Michel Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences* (New York: Vintage Books, 1994).
[16] Foucault, xviii.

just broken the water pitcher.[17] The inane taxonomy brings on waves of laughter, as it likewise reminds us that "order" is itself a linguistic construction, and not an a priori truth. As Foucault writes, Heterotopias "shatter or tangle common names. . . . [they] desiccate speech, stop words in their tracks, contest the very possibility of grammar at its source; they dissolve our myths and sterilize the lyricism of our sentences," and Borges' linking of the otherwise incongruous categories and the consequent disordering does exactly that.[18]

This definition easily reminds me of queer cultural practices such as camp and parody, or pastiche and bricolage, as these queer aesthetics pull together various referents and operate within communities and cultural spaces. In each case, the side-stepping that occurs demonstrates a space of alternate social ordering, which are also spaces of play. Foucault's more thorough use of the term occurs in a lecture entitled *Des Espaces Autres* ("Of Other Spaces") which he gave to the Cercle d'études architecturales in Paris in 1967.[19] In this famous lecture Foucault predicts the rising interest in space within theoretical circles, stating that "We are at a moment, I believe, when our experience of the world is less that of a long life developing through time than that of a network that connects points and intersects with its own skein."[20] Though his lecture was given before the time of the internet, Foucault foreshadows the sense of immediacy that is both afforded and created by such technology with indications that "we are in the epoch of juxtaposition, the epoch of the near and far, of the side-by-side, of the dispersed."[21] Through this,

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[17] Jorge Luis Borges, *Other Inquisitions [Otras Inquisiciones (1937-1952)]*, trans. Ruth L.C. Simms (Austin, TX: University of Texas Press, 1964).
[18] Foucault, *The Order of Things: An Archaeology of the Human Sciences*, xviii.
[19] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias."
[20] Foucault, 93.
[21] Foucault, 93.

Foucault illustrates the contingency of spatial understandings to historical processes and knowledges, noting that *space too has a history*.

While Foucault did not himself discuss the subversive potential of the heterotopia, the concept of a liberatory physical/metaphysical space has long enjoyed a playground within both queer theory and postmodern philosophy.[22] Most focus on the fact that space is central to the construction and maintenance of identities and subjectivities, and in so doing, that spaces are saturated with relations of power and power-knowledge. In a short and sweet piece titled "Last Look at the Lex," Gayle Salamon demonstrates this saturation in her lament of the closing of the Lexington Bar in San Francisco. Just as my memories of Diva's are entangled with sounds, smells, and sights, Salamon describes the Lex through its physical reminders:

> One end of the vintage wooden bar is faintly pocked with a few indentations, haptic reminders of shots downed and glasses slammed the night the gay owners of the Eagle Tavern roared in on their bikes to pay their respects to the newly opened dive for dykes. At the other end, tinier circles and crescents, imprints sunk into the soft mahogany from a femme who danced atop the bar one night in her high heels.[23]

As a heterotopic space ripe with history and knowledge, the Lex was a shape shifter for Salamon: "living room and seminar room and organizing hall and art gallery and stage set. . . .

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[22] See Angela Jones, "Queer Heterotopias: Homonormativity and the Future of Queerness," *Interalia* 4 (2009); Duncan, "Renegotiating Gender and Sexuality in Public and Private Spaces"; Myslik, "Renegotiating the Social/Sexual Identities of Places: Gay Communities as Safe Havens or Sites of Resistance?"; Edward W. Soja, *Thirdspace: Journeys to Los Angeles and Other Real-and-Imagined Places* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1996); Homi Bhabha, *The Location of Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1994); hooks, "Choosing the Margin as a Space of Radical Openness"; Gloria Anzaldua, *Borderlands/La Frontera: The New Mestiza* (San Francisco: Spinsters/Aunt Lute, 1987); Victor Turner, "Liminality and Communicatas," in *The Ritual Process: Structure and Anti-Structure* (Chicago: Aldine Publishing, 1969), 94–130.

[23] Gayle Salamon, "Last Look at the Lex," *Studies in Gender and Sexuality* 16, no. 2 (2015): 147.

How one space simultaneously manifested so many different places was part of its particular magic."[24]

It is precisely these entanglements that make spatial (and temporal) investigations of queer spaces so valuable as starting points for investigations into the construction, creation, and surveillance of sexuality. In *Architecture from the Outside,* for example, Elizabeth Grosz sketches the fraught mutuality of bodies and cities, whereby the "city" via both its systems and its structures plays a role in the social construction of bodies (i.e. through organizing sensory, familial, and sexual lives, as well as controlling access to goods and services).[25] As they are taken up by queer theorists, the *marked* qualities of spaces such as those discussed above (Diva's and The Lex) are particularly salient to queer communities. Whether through hushed whisperings from those in "the know" regarding a local queer hangout, the rainbow flags adorning the street lights on Davies Street in Vancouver, or the stamp of a queer signifier such as the pink triangle that used to mark Edmonton's *Play Nightclub,* queer spaces are not "normal" spaces; they are doors that open upon worlds where gender and sexuality are central players, rather than outliers.

Foucault also describes Heterotopias as "slices in time."[26] They are places where one is able to break with traditional time, whether through the carnivalesque activities of a festival, the intermittent other-worldly times of vacation villages, or even the time of libraries, which Foucault describes as heterotopias of "indefinitely accumulating time."[27] This encourages the kind of vertical temporal slicing that we engaged with in the reading of Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* as Billie/Billy and Spike/Spikkers repeated themes in a vertical living present,

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[24] Salamon, 146.
[25] Grosz, *Architecture from the Outside: Essays on Virtual and Real Space*, 108–9; See also Ahmed, *Queer Phenomenology*; Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*.
[26] Foucault, "Of Other Spaces: Utopias and Heterotopias," 6.
[27] Foucault, 7.

adding complex layers of memory and history in each contraction. Returning to the back alley behind *Diva's* in Saskatoon—arguably more of a heterotopic space than the bar itself—it contracts a material past where the single rainbow flag represented a "need to know" privacy. The smokers that spilled out of the bar ducked into nearby alcoves in order to hide from view, and no one entered without a membership. Today, these safety/policing measures are replaced with huge crowds outside and inside the space, and although memberships are no longer needed to enter, there is a shared community history amongst patrons who remember this past.

While discussing queer spaces and heterotopias, I am also reminded of what constitutes a non-queer space. The physical queer site differs significantly from heterosexual spaces, places, and sites as generally the queer subject assumes all sites are *not* queer. We look for a sign, some symbolic message that we are welcome. This is often the rainbow, but can also be welcoming text, a pink triangle, a large "Q," or other components of the (private) cultural language that was developed as a safety mechanism for those on both the inside and the outside. Today, the barriers are not quite as heavy, as the growing popularity of "Safe Spaces" campaigns have helped us move toward more fluid, flexible, and queer-positive spaces, and any teacher, healthcare provider, dance studio, or storeowner can slap a safe space sign on a window or stick a rainbow sticker on their cash register to mark the space as "safe." Although such signs invite LGBTQ2S people in, they still serve as indications that a space must be claimed "safe," rather than simply being so.

Sometimes "safe" spaces have no rainbows or flags, but are rather created through the presence of queer bodies, as they are read in various settings. In "N'tacimowin inna nah': Our Coming in Stories" Alex Wilson shares stories from a qualitative research project on how Two Spirit people experience themselves alongside intersecting experiences of racism, sexism, and

homophobia. One participant shares a story of attending a Pow-wow where "safe space" was an event-in-motion:

> When the drumming started, I was sitting still, listening and watching… And then a blur flew by me and landed inside the circle of dancers that had formed…. It was a two-spirit dancing as it should be. After that, more two-spirits drifted into the circle. I sat and watched, my eyes edged with tears. I knew my ancestors were with me; I had invited them. We sat and watched all night, proud of our sisters and brothers, yet jealous of their bravery. The time for the last song came. Everybody had to dance. I entered the circle, feeling the drumbeat in my heart. The songs came back to me. I circled the dance area, and in my most humble moment, with the permission of my ancestors, my eleven-year-old two-spirit steps returned to me.[28]

As Wilson reads this story through the experiences of her other research participants she describes it as one of coming in, rather than coming out, where coming in is "not a declaration or an announcement. Rather, it is an affirmation of interdependent identity."[29] As a culturally-situated shift, Wilson notes that coming-in is an act of empowerment; it enacts the process of understanding one's place within their community, family, and culture, alongside their socio-historical position in a settler-colonial framework. In this example, it is also a temporal move as it contracts the speaker's youth, and a feeling of freedom that returns only through dance. We will return to Wilson's concept of coming in at a later point in this chapter, but for now, the specter of the "safe space" in its variety of expressions continues as a valuable site for gender and sexually diverse people even though I remain curious about the public signification that

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[28] Wilson, "N'tacimowin Inna Nah'," 197.
[29] Wilson, 196.

"Queer Friendly Space" signs create. Will queer space always be *marked?* Will it always need to come forward as *safe?* We don't have answers to this yet, but within community spaces the safe space poster engages multiple readings at once: it is a welcoming in, a gold star of allyship, it shores up a past of unsafe space, and it is an indicator of straight and cis-guilt trying to make amends.

Marking space as safe or queer positive is as much a project of acknowledging the existence of LGBTQ2S and other gender and sexually diverse people, as it is an opportunity to think about bodies, beings, and becomings in new ways. Likewise, imagining a queer *time* serves as a rupture to our anticipated timelines. The repeated refrain throughout the scholarship is that queer time sits slightly askew of "heterosexual" time, and as such is able to re-route heteronormativity. As we learned already in chapter one, Halberstam, Edelman, Muñoz, and many others write in response to an overarching structuring of *life* as that which follows a heteronormative trajectory: childhood→ adulthood→ marriage→ children→death. This largely utopic and definitively progressive path renders queer lives invisible in Halberstam's case, literally results in no future for queers, as a queer life is equated with negativity in Edelman's case, and doesn't go nearly far enough in terms of imagining a future where queerness is a collective potentiality in Muñoz's case.[30] For many working in the field the side-step of queer time, with its elongated adolescence and its 15-minute "gay time" delay, offers room to breathe, grow, fail, and explore. Addressing their inability to "grow" according to the heteronormative trajectory, Kathryn Stockton takes up this delay in her concept of "growing sideways."[31]

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[30] See Halberstam, *In a Queer Time and Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*; Edelman, *No Future*; Muñoz, *Cruising Utopia*.
[31] Kathryn Bond Stockton, *The Queer Child, or Growing Sideways in the Twentieth Century* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2009), 6.

Stockton discusses the propensity for gay children to grow astray during childhood periods due to complicated experiences of being invisible and uncertain, and the various resiliencies and motivations that such experiences add to what otherwise feel stagnant. An interesting point within Stockton's "growing sideways" is that she weaves the horizontal growth of queer children and adults together such that the two may share a lateral space of shared understanding and experience. This temporal contact zone creates kinship patterns that are also out of step with our familiar heteronormative progress narratives as they jump the timelines between adolescence and adulthood. Even more interestingly, they collapse the timelines entirely by bringing intergenerational conversations about coming out, shame, isolation, desire, and expression to the fore.

Now, in the interest of ensuring that I don't solidify other identities through opening up queer temporalities, I am aware that the critique of the "heteronormative trajectory," as much as it impacts real bodies, is also an imagined path which is as limiting for heterosexual people as it is for queers. Anticipatory regimes of marriage and child-rearing (including that assumption that everyone can and/or wants to have children) wield heavy swords against any who don't abide by them—or those who engage with some access points and not others. Though they are referencing primarily queer subjects, McCallum and Tuhkanen's claim that "living on the margins of social intelligibility alters one's pace; one's tempo becomes at best contrapuntal, syncopated, and at worst, erratic, arrested," applies to all expressions of gender and sexuality (of which heterosexuality and cisgender are a part).[32] McCallum and Tuhkanen's sentiment echoes a line from Lila's poetic article about queer time where they share their experience of growing up

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[32] McCallum and Tuhkanen, "Becoming Unbecoming: Untimely Mediations," 1.

without role models or images of what their little tomboy self could become. Lila writes "My path forward never felt like a chronological progression towards a fixed point. But rather a whole lot of fumbling self-discovery. An erratic and uneasy becoming."[33] Further, Lila notes that queer time is like a "self-declared snow day" or a chance to side-step the clock-time of offices, norms, and expectations, because such things are not meant for us anyway. In this alternate worldly ordering—*this queer space and time*—there is less an urgency of critique than a sense of play, a slowing down and speeding up of our familiar narratives, and opportunities to dip into humour, playfulness, and the stolen time of a snow storm.

In what may be considered part of a second generation of queer temporalities, Halberstam's book *A Queer Art of Failure* is a rich testament to this queer levity. Halberstam pilfers, not philosophers, feminist, and cultural theorists, but cartoons, popular artists, and popular music for shiny and *affective* gems of language, art, and practice. For example, Halberstam dedicates an entire chapter to the animated films of *Chicken Run* (2000), *Toy Story* (1995), *Monsters Inc.* (2001), *Robots* (2005), *March of the Penguins* (2005), *Bee Movie* (2007), and *Finding Nemo* (2003), illustrating the ways that animated films revel in the childhood domain of failure, awkwardness, humility, and limitation.[34] Calling this genre "Pixarvolt" Halberstam argues that these films "make subtle as well as overt connections between communitarian revolt and queer embodiment."[35] The chapter itself hops the reader into a time travelling device, compelling me to go back and re-make all of those childhood memories: Might

[33] Lila, "The Pace of Queer Time."
[34] J Jack Halberstam, *The Queer Art of Failure* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011), 27.
[35] Halberstam, 29.

I attribute my love for revolution to *Toy Story*? My interest in feminist materialisms to *Bee Movie*?

For example, Halberstam explores *Finding Nemo*, an animated film about a father and son clownfish who are separated from one another when a fishing boat scoops little Nemo up in its net. Marlin, Nemo's father, is terribly timid, having already lost his partner to the sea, and so sets off, rather reluctantly on a wild adventure to find his son. Luckily, Marlin has help from his friend Dory, a quirky and delightful angelfish (queerly voiced by Ellen DeGeneres) who has no short-term memory. Throughout the film, Dory easily steals the show (even securing her own sequel, *Finding Dory*) and Halberstam conducts an analysis of Dory's remembering, forgetting, looping back and looping through as an ode to queer time. In particular, Halberstam demonstrates the way that Dory's short-term memory loss troubles generational logic through the rupture of forgetfulness. As queer subjects and makers-of-queer-time, we may want to "forget family and forget lineage and forget tradition in order to start from a new place, not the place where the old engenders the new, where the old makes a place for the new, but where the new begins a fresh, unfettered by memory, tradition, and usable pasts."[36] This stretching toward futures unknown contracts patterns of kinship that have always been different within queer familial groups as people whose families have disowned them are adopted by others, or friends develop ritualized gatherings around holidays and other "family" times. Of course, as chapter two demonstrates, such kinships also create a sense of belonging and a temporal drag as they bring past into present through memory and nostalgia. In their discussion of *Finding Nemo*,

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[36] Halberstam, 70.

Halberstam crafts a "queer family" from the Nemo-Marlin-Dory trio as the father-son trope of Nemo and Marlin are endlessly disrupted by Dory's queerness:

> [B]ecause of her short-term memory loss [Dory] actively blocks the transformation of Marlin, Nemo, and herself into nuclearity; she is not Nemo's mother substitute nor Marlin's new wife, she cannot remember her relation to either fish, and so she is forced, and happily so, to create relation anew every five minutes or so.[37]

As this example demonstrates, the "queer family" here is not bound to the sexuality of its components, but rather an indicator of its *queering* of the imagined heteronormative trajectory that expects man-woman-children. The queer family, then, far exceeds this definition and can include all range (and number) of parents/mothers/fathers/children/niblings/friends.

One of the queerest elements of *Finding Nemo* is Dory's inability to support the linear storytelling motif. The absence of short-term memory ensures that her timeline is characterized by fits and starts, as Halberstam writes: "Dory's . . . odd sense of time introduces absurdity into an otherwise rather straight narrative."[38] As well, Dory's forgetfulness, and time-triggers also show us the passivity of memory as she often (literally) bumps up against objects, other fish, or visuals that trigger contractions of her long-term memory, and long ago past. These moments exemplify the passive contractions of the past and anticipations of the future that the living present enacts, demonstrating, not that we are oblivious to what's ahead, but rather that we are comingled with our spatial, relational, and temporal environments at all times. Dory's durational comportment shows us explicitly what a disconnected subject really is, or rather, *how a disconnected subject really lives.* Further, Dory's unpredictable timeline is characteristic of what

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[37] Halberstam, 80.
[38] Halberstam, 81.

coming out actually looks like for queer people, as it follows multiple, disconnected, disparate, and years-apart paths. I am reminded how in addition to coming out 18 years ago, I came out yesterday at a cocktail party when the stranger my partner and I asked to photograph us couldn't understand why we didn't also want our friend to join us in the photo. When we smiled and told her that we were partners she became hysterical with embarrassed glee, as though she had happened upon the greatest exhibit at the zoo and was trying desperately not to look.

Halberstam's playful, humourous work, echoed in Lila's *Autostraddle* piece, and lived uproariously in queer cultures, whether through drag, queer comedy, queer performance artists, or parody, is unfortunately quieter within the academic terrain of queer theory than it used to be. Has irreverence gone out of style? Has it been replaced by a "serious" queer canon? Halberstam's humour is always a reminder for those moments when we take ourselves too seriously. It reminds us that tthese are our own ridiculous, complicated, and messy lives after all, and if faced with a choice, very few of us would choose to watch *Citizen Kane* over *Finding Nemo.*[39] And so now we (re)turn to the coming out event, as an event that is both a line of flight and a yardstick used to measure queer identity formation within our social, medical, and cultural systems.

COME OUT, COME OUT WHEREVER YOU ARE

Doctor: "How long have you felt this way?"

[39] Orson Welles, *Citizen Kane*, Drama, Mystery, 1941; Stanton and Unkrich, *Finding Nemo*. Note that my reference to *Citizen Kane* is tongue-in-cheek as Deleuze spent a great deal of time discussing the film in *Cinema II: The Time-Image*; Gilles Deleuze, *Cinema II: The Time-Image*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1986).

Dean Spade: “Does realness reside in the length of time a desire exists?”

—Dean Spade, “Resisting Medicine, Re/Modeling Gender”

After my “coming out” event occurred, I went back and re-read the past: all of those best friends that I liked too much, those short hair phases. “Ah yes” I said, I have been queer *all along.* “Ah yes” my audience said, “I always knew that about you.” For my ex-boyfriends, it confirmed the fact that we didn’t work out; for my female friends, it was an opportunity for them to locate themselves within my adolescent trajectory of desire. Every retroactive reading was part of a desire to give an account of oneself, to be able to read one’s life as intelligible, as consistent, and the communal uptake of my coming out illustrates the interconnectedness of my story with those closest to me. They wanted it to be their story too. They wanted to understand me, and in so doing, understand themselves.

The performative work of the (coming out) speech act is its role in bringing about a sense of freedom, of admitting a truth long hidden. It is performative in the sense that the act is never merely a reporting, but always the act of “coming out” itself. Illustrating this, Sedgwick references a T-shirt that ACT UP used to sell in New York that read “I am out, therefore I am,”[40]—a visual statement that presents queerness as something which must be stated publicly, lest it does not exist. Our early queer theory texts such as Sedgwick’s *Epistemology of the Closet* and Butler’s “Imitation and Gender Insubordination,” each discuss the way that the performativity of “coming out” is its making of an identity that reinforces and is reinforced by a

[40] Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1990), 4.

heteronormative structuring of desire and subjectivity.[41] This process relies on the closet as "the defining structure for gay oppression in this century," and thus the act of opening that closet door is an ontological transference from oppressed to liberated.[42] Not surprisingly much early gay and lesbian activism was intent upon blowing open the closet and increasing the ranks of those that were "out." Activists encouraged closeted individuals to perform the necessary speech act, rallying: "What can you do—alone? That answer is obvious. You're *not* alone, and you can't afford to try to be. That closet door—never very secure as protection is even more dangerous now. You must come out, for your own sake and for the sake of all of us."[43] Some of these projects therefore relied on "outing" known LGBT individuals.[44] For example, activist Peter Tatchell, of the British activist group OutRage! was a documented proponent of outing public LGBT figures, and well-known US gay rights activist Harvey Milk is also said to have engaged in the practice as a political strategy.[45]

It is easy to understand the desire for a world in which coming out is a thing of the past. However, as Butler expands, the concept of "coming out" is exactly that which maintains the inside/outside binary. Our very identities are bound to our deliverance from inauthenticity and

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[41] Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*; Judith Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," in *Inside/Out*, ed. Diana Fuss (New York & London: Routledge, 1991), 13–29.
[42] Kosofsky Sedgwick, *Epistemology of the Closet*, 71.
[43] Philip Bockman, "A Fine Day," *New York Native* 175 (1986): 13.
[44] See William A. Henry III, "Ethics: Forcing Gays Out of the Closet," *Time*, January 29, 1990, http://content.time.com/time/subscriber/article/0,33009,969264-2,00.html.
[45] See Ian Lucas, *OutRage!: An Oral History* (London: Cassell, 1998); Andrew Brown, "How Outing Came in with a Vengeance," *The Independent Online*, March 21, 1995, http://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/how-outing-came-in-with-a-vengeance-1612094.html; Randy Shilts, *The Mayor of Castro Street: The Life and Times of Harvey Milk* (St. Martin's Press, 1982). There is a scholarly and journalistic debate surrounding the practice of outing largely from the mid 90s. OutRage! And Queer Nation outed public figures in order to expose their hypocrisy (in the case of gay Republicans, for example) and/or to create public role models (in the case of famous figures). The counter-arguments include the case that outing remove's the matter of choice from its targets, can easily put people in danger, and does not result in effective role models. See Simon Watney, "Queer Epistemology: Activism, 'Outing', and the Politics of Sexual Identities," *Critical Quarterly* 36, no. 1 (1994): 13–27, for a comprehensive overview.

being out as queer itself must "produce the closet again and again in order to maintain itself as 'out.'"[46] I remember a headline from 2013 documenting an athlete's coming out: "NBA's Jason Collins comes out as the first openly gay athlete in major U.S. team sport."[47] Never mind the numerous professional female athletes who had been out for years, our reliance on a world of "firsts" and "only" repeats itself ad nauseam in an effort to mark the "other" as an anomaly. In this case, the subjectivation of the speech act is threefold. First it reinforces the value of the liberatory coming out narrative, while secondly it ensures that the queer subject is a rare creature and thus unthreatening. Its third function in this case is to buttress the heteropatriarchy that places female athletes under erasure and thus reminds us of the operations of gay male misogyny as they denigrate femininity in lesbian, hetero, trans, and other subjects.[48]

In instances of coming out as trans, the story diffracts. Though the confessional speech act still serves a liberatory function, Lal Zimman argues that there are quite a few differences between coming out as trans and coming out as gay, lesbian, or bi. In particular, through a study that involved open-ended interviews with nine trans individuals who shared their coming out stories, Zimman teases out a difference between disclosure and declaration in both the interviews and their review of the relevant literature. Declaration refers to the initial act of claiming a trans identity and disclosure to the act of sharing one's transgender history after transition.[49] As per the narratives of the research participants, Zimman indicates that the language of declaration aligns

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[46] Butler, "Imitation and Gender Insubordination," 309.
[47] undefined, "NBA's Jason Collins Comes out as the First Openly Gay Athlete in Major U.S. Team Sport," NOLA.com, April 29, 2013, http://www.nola.com/sports/index.ssf/2013/04/nbas_jason_collins_comes_out_a.html.
[48] To be fair, the article includes a final paragraph that states that "female athletes have found more accepteance in coming out," and then cites both Brittney Griner (a basketball player) and Tennis player Martina Navratilova who has been out since 1981. Seemingly, the use of "gay" refers only to *men*, in this context, however, the author's small attempt at accuracy fails to justify its broad strokes.
[49] Zimman, "'The Other Kind of Coming Out,'" 60.

very closely with the socio-cultural role of "coming out" amongst LGB people, whereby it represents that momentous act of freedom in breaking down the closet door. However, the linguistic act of disclosure differs from the coming out narrative as it does not serve as an act of sharing a long-held truth about oneself. Given that most trans people don't see the gender they were assigned at birth as a fundamental and true self, there is no "giving an account of oneself" that takes place in the disclosure of a transgender history. Instead it is a (sometimes forced) contextualization of a lived experience and can often be a very private narrative. Also, as Zimman documents, the act of disclosure can have the impact of undermining a trans individual's lived gender, particularly in cases where they are not visibly trans, and where their audience is unable to resist the lure of cisnormativity. Not only that, but due to the entrenched monomythic force of coming out, audiences repeatedly expect trans people to submit to a public narrative of struggle and transformation, an expectation which is not shared by audiences of LGB confessionals.[50]

Of course, the differences here *matter,* as they remind us that speech acts are performative and so "I am a lesbian," as a performative utterance of sexuality, often has the effect of orienting the speaker toward an other (woman), while the phrase "I am trans" orients the speaker in different directions depending on its function as a disclosure or declaration. In the case of the former, the speech act contracts a past that may or may not include various transition activities (such as taking hormones, gender confirming surgeries, name and pronoun changes, etc.), while the declaration speech act, in Zimman's case, anticipates such activities taking place in a future timeline. To speak of coming out, then, is to diffract the closet around gender as well

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[50] E. van der Wal, "Crossing over, Coming out, Blending in: A Trans Interrogation of the Closet," *South African Review of Sociology* 47, no. 3 (2016): 44–64.

as sexuality and to pay heed to the differences between and through these various modes of subjectivation.

Such a complicated terrain still straddles the worlds of naming, visibility, and self-identification. Are we reaching toward a queer future where there is no “in” or “out”? Are we paying heed to the power dynamics, vulnerabilities, and hierarchies that contribute to any one individual’s navigation of sexuality, gender, and “in-ness” or “out-ness”? It seems as though “outing” projects were exuberantly naïve in their assumption that a simple speech act could flip compulsory heterosexuality on its head (just as we have wrongly assumed that equal representation will somehow do away with patriarchy). Today, 30 years later, coming out is still a queer dance between the sacred and the profane. We ask, “are you out?” of new friends, we slide fingers in and out of a lover’s hand depending on the street, and we navigate an inside/outside world where the cold nakedness of an unplanned confession creeps in every time a new acquaintance assumes heterosexual or cisgender identity.

Applying a novel lens to an old story, Wilson’s use of coming in reads the coming out event as a Western phenomenon, where rather than serving as a “declaration of an independent identity,” coming in is a process of circling back, reclaiming, reinventing, and redefining one’s roots and communities.[51] From a temporal standpoint, the coming out/coming in comparison resonates with Mark Rifkin’s concept of “settler time” and its differences from Indigenous temporalities. Recognizing settler time as the linear, progress-oriented time that we have discussed at length in this project, Rifkin indicates the colonialism of such a timescape as it expects all others to adhere to its path. Within Canada’s colonial history, this proves particularly

[51] Wilson, “N’tacimowin Inna Nah’,” 197.

troubling, as Rifkin is suspicious of attempts to craft a shared timeline between settler and Indigenous communities:

> The positing of inherently mutual participation in the unfolding of time—itself imagined de facto as a line reaching from the past toward the future—contributes to the adoption of a standard model of development in which non-Euro-American conceptions and experiences of time appear as deviations that are transitioning toward a dominant framework.[52]

Further, Rifkin notes that any concept of a "natural" time "implicitly casts non-Euro-American forms of temporal experience as a form of belief, rendering them less real than dominant accounts of a shared, linear time."[53] Wilson's *curving* of the time of coming in so that it is a circular rather than a linear process, expresses an alternate timeline to what Rifkin describes as settler time, but the key uptake is not that it represents a deviation from the norm, an alternative to colonial time, but rather that it becomes one among many possible heterogeneous temporalities. Rifkin calls for the temporal sovereignty of Indigenous people to create, remember, and participate in a plurality of timelines in order that settler time lose its grip on the present moment—as it is lived by settler and Indigenous people.[54]

As we continue to think about the temporality of the coming out/coming in experience, a final takeaway from Rifkin is his discussion of the role of storytelling in creating and remembering the plural timelines of Indigenous people as he writes: "The work of storying, then, can be thought of less as the act of telling a story than as the immanent dynamism in the ways

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[52] Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*, 12.
[53] Rifkin, 20.
[54] Rifkin, 16.

stories move through the world, the kinds of qualitative relations they generate as part of producing collective experiences of duration."[55] The *storying* activity of coming in, then, operates to generate everyday relationships between teller and listener, or subject and community, askance of the settler timelines that view coming out as an inside/outside phenomenon. In this way, and as Rifkin acknowledges, coming in resonates more closely with philosophies of becoming, as its circular, interdependent form refuses the beginning and the end of the story and instead engages in the making of Two Spirit identity as a place and time of belonging.

With this enriched sense of the storying work of coming out (coming in) let us return to the concept of the event, as remember that for Deleuze, the *event* is more than a "happening," an "occurrence," a locatable entity (that day in April, 2000-whenever that I came out to my mom), and instead becomes a potentiality that is "actualized in particular circumstances."[56] This means that the event cannot be abstracted from what led to its emergence, nor from what it creates. It also means that an event is never merely one component in a linear timeline—i.e. I spoke my queerness at 19 because my latent homosexuality had been there all along—and instead, every event ruptures a chronological timeline. This means that the coming out event, though embedded in a pre-existing context, has a life of its own, it is a line of flight, pure potential (as we will see in the closing section of this chapter).

Now, there is an important nuance to this understanding of the event for on the one hand we can follow the event entirely, determining its historical preparation, path, and decomposition, while on the other we can entangle ourselves in the event, living in it as a *becoming* and thus

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[55] Rifkin, 36.
[56] Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, 1997, 170.

"[growing] both young and old in it at once."[57] Through the first path we have the opportunity to trace the event: there was this one time in grade two when I had just cut my hair short. I walked into the girls' bathroom and the older girls gasped and shouted, "there's a boy in the bathroom!" Though it is an entanglement of gender and sexuality, the moment represents a transgressional root and I have returned to the memory over the years and rolled it around in different ways. At first it was deflating; I was ashamed for having been called out so publicly. But as I began to tell the story as an opener while teaching intro women and gender studies classes, it became a badge of honour, my childhood act of rebellion.

But let's try another path. Let's grow young and old in the coming out event at once. As I utter these words I anticipate a future where I am a queer woman living in a world that has no boundaries and no need for a coming out speech act. At the same time I anticipate a moment, two minutes ahead where I am awkward, nervous, I don't know if my audience will be warm. I contract the bathroom incident from grade two, but also kissing a boy under a tree in grade six and being thrilled. I mourn the loss of a heterosexual self, a self that supposedly had a clear and pre-determined path, but I am nearly delirious with the anticipation of a queer life and the thought of meeting other lesbians one day. I am also rushing through every lesbian, butch, dyke, gay man, queer hero, I have ever seen on television or in the movies (very few) and trying to locate myself within this thin and stereotyped cultural imaginary. I am thinking about what I should *wear*, how I should *talk*, what kind of music I should listen to. This wild temporal roller-coaster is a thick, vertical temporality, and it shows me that there is no "root" for my queer differentiations. Such things are always and only ever read retroactively and every retroactive

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[57] Gilles Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, European Perspectives (New York: Columbia University Press, 1995), 170–71.

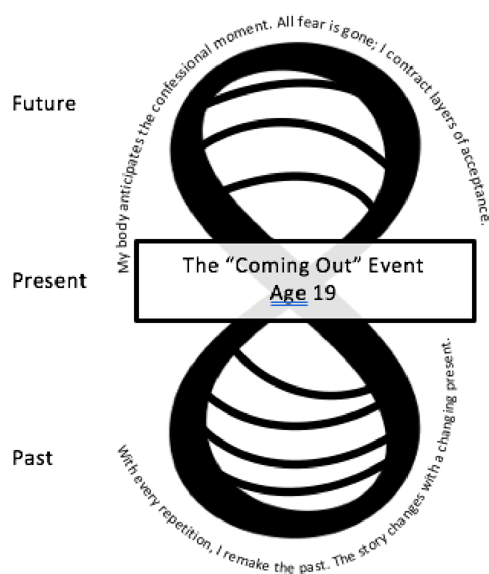

Figure 3: The Thick Time of Coming Out

reading trades in potential for the predictable (a limitless future for a gender-troubled childhood). It is in this moment of at once growing young and old in the coming out event, that the materialities of memory come into clearest view: so many moments of my queer life are linked to the artefacts, sounds, and texts that existed as counter-cultural entities. Likewise, the story that Wilson shares of her research participant's Pow-wow experience lives within the embodied experience of dancers moving, circles opening and closing, and the steady beat of the Pow-wow drum.[58]

Rather than giving priority to coming out as a movement from the inside to the outside, or from artifice to authenticity, this unfolding of the "event" enables us to live inside and outside of its power. This means that my particular coming out, the one that for whatever reason I have marked as the "event," is not an axis point in my path of self-actualization, and instead, it is one "cut" among many. The particular speech act has as much presence today, as it did then. In fact, its presence has already grown exponentially the farther I get from that particular time, such is

[58] Wilson, "N'tacimowin Inna Nah'," 197.

the matter of memory and the stickiness of telling a story again and again (see figure 3). Rather than allowing the utterance "I am gay," "I am trans," or "I am pansexual" to fix us to any given umbrella of gender or sexuality, and thus allowing the event to be merely a causal force in my ability to live a queer life, it is an opening up to this present in a way that lets me ask why I have marked that event as *the* event, and in so doing have overwritten alternate lines of flight as they serve as potentialities for becoming-otherwise.

Now, I admitted in the introduction to this project that the coming out event is old news. It is a boundary-making story that has already been told, but I trudge through it here because as it is lived and experienced by thousands of people, day in and day out, it remains an outlier. Academic circles may have theorized its redundancy thirty years ago, but coming out has yet to go *out of style.* In fact, coming out has gone virtual as many youth use YouTube as a platform for the confessional act. In a study of 35 different coming out videos within four Anglophone countries (the United States, Ireland, Britain, and Australia), cultural theorist Michael Lovelock writes that coming out on YouTube serves as a community-building strategy to share experiences of "being queer in a straight world."[59] Paying heed to the same queer scholarship that has grown tired of the coming out trope, Lovelock's research findings tell a more nuanced story as he describes the current era of coming out on YouTube as "less a process of self-revelation than a journey to self-validation, functioning as a vital resource for speaking back to heteronormativity and negotiating the contradictory position – normalised yet beyond the norm."[60] We see this as well in practices of coming in as they represent steps of self-

[59] Lovelock, "'My Coming out Story,'" 83.
[60] Lovelock, 83.

determination for Two Spirit people, much as the term Two Spirit operates as a culturally specific term that is applied to both gender and sexuality.

My intent throughout this coming out story/story about coming out is to demonstrate that the coming out event is not easily placed. On the one hand, coming out is the paramount act of "giving an account of oneself," while on another it still references a progress narrative of bringing a hidden "truth" to the fore. In all of its expressions, coming out is entangled with the thick tale of pasts, presents, and futures, which anchors it to not only its teller, but every single listener for years to come. No subject is free from the sinews, tendon, families (chosen or not), traumatic experiences, or ridiculous celebrations, that have layered and unfolded upon one another in the time-body we each call "me."

So how do we live complicated, messy, embodied, desiring, sexed, and gendered lives without *fixing* a static subjectivity? How do we express ourselves outside of the gender binary and without leaning in to progress narratives about what the future should be, could be? The easiest answer is that such transgressive enactments are already taking place. They have already been taking place for centuries as humans have always exceeded our categories of analysis (*conditions of possibility*). For effectively, *there is nothing new*, there is just alternate ordering, new assemblages, various contractions of the past that open up novel futures. As this plays out in more specific terms it means that: *we are already* balancing the legitimating force of identity with the creativity and self-determination of our practices of giving account of oneself. *We are already* telling stories which resist rather than restrict. And *we are already* living queer lives that make more than history, but rather make novel futures. It is to this terrain that the final section of this chapter turns, demonstrating that it is through the apparatus of the living present that these lines of flight are brought into view. In particular, the uptake involves a collapse between the

dualism of nature-culture and a move toward a Deleuzian subjectivity, which is much less about a subject than it is about assemblages, rivers, and *time-bodies*.

TIME-BODIES: THE DELEUZIAN (NON) SUBJECT

Two decades into the 21st century, and more than fifty years after the word "post-structuralism" made its debut on the theoretical stage, it is not a stretch to say that we *live* in a poststructural world.[61] That is, we are immersed in a world where plurality, diversity, and change are the norms, we participate daily in the collapse of the divisions between local/global, virtual/real, and singular/multiple via cyberspace and an increasingly global media, and we are constantly faced with a plethora of options about who we want to be and how to shape ourselves as subjects. Queer theory has been at the forefront of these of activities, arguing particularly that sexuality and gender are cultural and historical constructs and thereby function more as regulatory fictions than coherent narratives. The benefits of this thread include troubling any attempts to define, naturalize, and biologize both sexuality and gender and the tradition of queer theory has thus given us the tools to understand sexuality and gender as both have been policed, expressed, enjoyed, and lived throughout the centuries. Really, where would we be without Butler's "*In imitating gender, drag implicitly reveals the imitative structure of gender itself—as well as its contingency*" or Derrida's "there is nothing outside of the text"?[62]

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[61] Though there is clearly no official "date" to indicate the beginning of post-structuralism I am referencing, the symposium on "The Languages of Criticism and the Sciences of Man" that took place at Johns Hopkins University in 1966 is sometimes cited as the point at which the tenor of post-structuralism began to be felt. This is also the symposium where Derrida gave the paper "Structure, Sign, and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," in *Margins of Philosophy* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1982), 201–331, which offers a critique of structuralism. For further discussion of this "origin story" see Graham Allen, *Roland Barthes* (New York & London: Routledge, 2003), 67.

[62] Butler, 175, emphasis in original; Jacques Derrida, *Of Grammatology*, trans. Gayatri Chakravorty Spivak (Baltimore: JHU Press, 1998), 158.

In Butler's short, provocative text *Giving an Account of Oneself*, she veers away from her early 90s focus on gendered subject formation to look at the problematic gap that surfaces when we address the subject as the product of our social and cultural makings, and yet still need a ground for responsibility and accountability.[63] If all we are is performative beings, the product of an external world, what impetus do we have to act ethically? Butler addresses this gap by arguing that we are ultimately relational beings, and this position makes us vulnerable to one another. As well, even though it is through the act of giving an account of oneself that we position ourselves within the world, we can only ever give partial accounts; we are only ever opaque, both to ourselves and to others. Butler writes that "there is no making of oneself (poiesis) outside of a mode of subjectivation (assujettisement) and hence, no self-making outside of the norms that orchestrate the possible forms that a subject may take."[64] As this connects to our subjectivity, it means not only that our relationships with one another are mediated through an existing social world, but that our knowledge of ourselves is also mitigated by such a terrain.

Let's think about this in relation to coming in/coming out. As itself an act of poiesis, coming out is entirely contingent upon its contexts. The fact that the act exists at all is a product of the queer cultural imaginary that tells us it is so. At the same time, in many ways we have—at least in a linguistic and theoretical sense—entirely over-conscribed the self, and thus dismissed the body. Butler herself queries "Have we perhaps unwittingly destroyed the possibility for agency with all this talk about being given over, being structured, being addressed?"[65] Speaking to the gap between our over-conscription to a social constructivism and our wish for agency,

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[63] Judith Butler, *Giving an Account of Oneself* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2005).
[64] Butler, 17.
[65] Butler, 99.

Butler draws on our absolute relationality, noting that "none of us is fully bounded, utterly separate, but, rather, we are in our skins, given over, in each other's hands, at each other's mercy."[66] What an affective sentence in the context of coming out to an unpredictable audience, as is often the case. When it comes to ethical or moral responsibility, it is precisely this intimacy, this closeness to that which we did not choose, that form the conditions under which we are to assume responsibility. Although this intimate responsibility has a great deal of uptake (and I will return to this in the concluding chapter), the affective power of the Butler-Foucauldian subject-performance has a great deal of force within queer contexts, and this performance has its drawbacks.

Butler's theory of gender performativity renders "gender" the consequence of institutions, practices, and discourses acting on the body, and the body, concomitantly, the product of *acting* out the scripts that it has been given. Put another way, performativity is the process of making material what is given discursively (or socially), and in so doing, revealing gender's contingency. The subversive potential, then, lies in the active construction of meaning that occurs in each and every act, actions which walk a fine line between their adherence to the norm and the fact that there is no original to which they refer.[67] The concept of performativity contracts Foucault's technologies of production which also illustrate the ways in which gender is regulated, reiterated, and reinforced by hegemonic discourses, and yet always a process of subjectivation—of subject creation.[68] For both Butler and Foucault, freedom is possible in those rare moments of subversion (the drag performance, homosexual pleasures) and yet more often

[66] Butler, 101.
[67] Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*.
[68] Foucault never himself addressed gender, but instead constructed the technologies of production in relation to the construction of male identity and sexuality Michel Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction* (New York: Vintage, 1990).

than not we are trapped within Foucault's panoptic stronghold. As both Butler's concept of performativity and Foucault's concept of freedom demonstrate, we have long been invested in the subversive, the transgressive, the abject, or alterior acts, rather than unhindered actions of transformation and social change.

Rather than assuming that the cracks in the concrete are tied to tiny slivers of freedom, I intend throughout this work to be delighted by true lines of flight, or rather the powerful actions of chance, intention, life, and transformation that are happening everywhere and all around us, in all pasts, presents, and futures. Coming out is not only transgressive, it is powerful; asking for trans-specific healthcare in the Yukon is not only subversive, it is intentional and transformative. As feminist and queer scholars, we are often so focused on the practice of critique that we fail to see that we are always already exceeding every technology of power, every restriction of the gender binary, every refusal of bodies and pleasures. Taking up this affirmative stance with zest, scholars including Rosi Braidotti, Karen Barad, Iris van der Tuin, Manuel DeLanda, and many others have worked to reveal the dangers of arguments that the self is wholly given over to systems of control and subjectivation, and thus have shepherded affirmative and hopeful narratives about the body's agency within a seemingly pre-scripted sphere.[69] Sometimes called neo-materialism or critical materialism, other times new materialism or feminist materialisms, this "material turn" indicates a shift in our understandings of *matter*—a shift which views matter

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[69] Rosi Braidotti, "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics*, ed. Diana Coole and Susan Frost (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 201–19; Rosi Braidotti, *The Posthuman* (Cambridge, MA: Polity Press, 2013); Iris van der Tuin, "The New Materialist 'Always Already': On an A-Human Humanities," *NORA - Nordic Journal of Feminist and Gender Research* 19, no. 4 (2011): 285–90; Van Der Tuin, "A Different Starting Point, a Different Metaphysics"; Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*; Manuel DeLanda, *Philosophy & Simulation: The Emergence of Synthetic Reason* (London & New York: Continuum, 2010).

and more significantly *life* as an assemblage of autonomy, choice, freedom, anticipation, memory, triggers, thrills, and various unfoldings of experience and *affect.*

As a criticism of feminist poststructuralism and its seeming failure to account for the bodies, matter, materiality, and "life itself" that make up our lived experiences, feminist new materialists draw in a durational living present as a reminder that all subjects are subtended by the stories that they tell, and those stories that are told around them. What this demonstrates is that origin stories and quests to live as one's "authentic self" are effective, not only because they are mechanisms of controlling the narrative, but because they resonate with us as positive experiences, glimmers of hope, and warm memories. They make us feel safe, connected to a larger community, and as though we have purpose and sensibility. This does not mean that we are wholly given over to such narratives, but rather that it is never so easy as to assume that we can break out of the stories within which we are already being told. And also, that there is no clean moral line to be drawn between what a story should and should not include.

The material turn also demonstrates that we cannot fully understand our own environments and experiences without also understanding the effects we have on those things (whether people, plants, highways, or animals) around us, and concurrently, the effects that such "things" have on us. In an all too real example of this co-creative process, J.R. Latham discusses the continued popularity of Harry Benjamin's *The Transsexual Phenomenon* (originally published in the 60s) as a clinical guide for the medical community. Benjamin's text relies heavily on the "being born in the wrong body" narrative, which reproduces "sex-gender and gender dysphoria as static, predetermined and independent of medical encounters."[70] However, Latham outlines the modes

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[70] J.R. Latham, "Axiomatic: Constituting 'Transexuality' and Trans Sexualities in Medicine," *Sexualities* 22, no. 1–2 (2019): 14; Harry Benjamin, *The Transsexual Phenomenon*, 1996, Available at: http://tgmeds.org.uk/downs/phenomenon.pdf; As a positive improvement on this, in many cities in Canada, at the

through which Benjamin's text has become self-referential as its step-by-step guide for assessing and classifying trans patients was precisely the text that trans clients were reading in order to access surgery.[71] As Latham writes the "medical phenomenon of 'transsexuality' is self-referentially constituted" on account of the feedback loop between outmoded clinical guidelines and the strategic alignment with said guidelines in order to access desired procedures.[72] The coming out event operates within a similar feedback loop. It exists because it is the story that we tell; it is required because we ask for its relay.

I will discuss the inputs of the material turn in greater detail in chapter four, but I invoke it here as it opens a door within queer theory to change the ways that we talk about gender, sexuality, expression, confession, declaration, and disclosure in the first place. *How do we make an arrow out of our queerly becoming selves?* If we move away from *who* and *what* and *how,* and instead look at the *events*, and *becomings* through which singularities emerge, we are less beholden to the subject, and instead more interested in its *intensities*. We are more attuned to the multiplication of *affect* as each event has the power to create new ways of understanding sexuality, gender, and one's relationship to others.

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urging of local activists and community groups, healthcare providers are increasingly encouraged to use the Standards of Care as developed by the World Professional Association for Transgender Health (WPATH). In Canada, the Canadian Professional Association of Transgender Health (CPATH) endorses these standards of care and offers and annual conference and training summit (http://cpath.ca/en/). See "Standards of Care for the Health of Transsexual, Transgender, and Gender Nonconforming People, 7th Version" (WPATH), https://www.wpath.org/publications/soc.

[71] Latham, "Axiomatic: Constituting 'Transexuality' and Trans Sexualities in Medicine," 17. Latham relies on Sandy Stone's analysis of this feedback loop in "The Empire Strikes Back: A Posttranssexual Manifesto," in *The Transgender Studies Reader*, ed. Susan Stryker and Steven Whittle (New York & London: Routledge, 2006), 221–35.

[72] Latham, "Axiomatic: Constituting 'Transexuality' and Trans Sexualities in Medicine," 26.

To speak of *intensity* and *affect* is to shift the conversation from one of difference to one of *differenciation*.[73] Rather than thinking about identity differences as differences *in kind,* as we are accustomed to doing, even—especially?—in our multicultural, gender and sexually-diverse fields, we turn toward differenciations, that is variations without end, multiplications without cause. Differenciations refer to the infinite expressions of *being* that are spatio-temporal, that is, that are thick, durational contractions of corporeal experience (i.e. memories of what it is like to have homo-sex desire at the high school prom, that pinnacle of adolescent hetero-sexual development? Or embodied experiences of having a different skin colour than 99% of the residents of a small settler-populated town?). These timelines also anticipate futures as they impact our movements (maybe a terrible prom experience becomes the narrative that keeps me from coming out for another 20 years) and the movements of others (an Indigenous woman is watched every time she walks into the local grocery store; the town residents construct a story about her without her consent and when a theft occurs, she has no hope in denying a tale that's already been written).

The key here, however, is that although being expresses itself, subtends itself, in varying intensities and durations, this affective spatio-temporal *being*—these time-bodies—exists in the same way for all things. Deleuze's famous claim that "A single voice raises the clamour of being" refers to the fact that everything *is* in the same way.[74] Being is not a genus, species or a type, but only absolute expression and so when we talk about identity, diversity, multiplicity, or difference, at base, there is univocity—sameness—and from there we have *differenciation*, that

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[73] Deleuze discusses "differenciation" in *Bergsonism*, trans. Hugh Tomlinson and Barbara Habberjam (Brooklyn, New York: Zone Books, 1988); and Gilles Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, trans. Paul Patton (New York: Columbia University Press, 1994), 208–11, where differentiation refers to mathematical division, for Deleuze, differenciation is a process of becoming different; it is the process of variation and variability.
[74] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35.

is, multiple unfoldings of difference within a groundless, shared *being.* For example, the table in front of me expresses its being through its flat, hard surface while I express being through my elastic skin. We both *are* as in *exist* in the same way, but our extensions and durations are unique. Likewise, variations in skin colour, divergent sexual desires, and unique socio-economic contexts do not create different *species*, but rather multiple and unique expressions of a subject that is always already entangled. As Deleuze writes "all things are in absolute proximity, and whether they are large or small, inferior or superior, none of them participates more or less in being, nor receives it by analogy," and so, differenciation is not numerical or quantitative difference, but qualitative, durational difference.[75] As this impacts my relationship to the table, it recognizes the equality of our being. The table may feel like a tool for my work, but its presence as an extension in space and time is not dissimilar from mine. It is not a tool "for" me, but exists and persists through, beyond, and before "me." As it impacts the relationships between subjects, univocity flattens all relationships into horizontal heterogeneities; being is the same for all things.

Now, it is important to note that I have distinctly made our time-bodies vertical, as well as horizontal. This vertical univocity is not indicative of a hierarchy, but rather a signal of a living timeslice that thickens the present of all beings at the same time that they are in horizontal (and co-creative) relationships with all others. Through this we are able to open up the space for a reworking of the neoliberal paradigm, one that hinges on precisely the most feared postmodern move: the denial of the autonomous, rational, and distinctly humanist subject. This denial does not abandon us as fragmented selves, nor does it turn us into the intersectionally raced, gendered,

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[75] Deleuze, 37.

sexed, classed, and aged subject who reads each identity category alongside the other in an effort to produce a richer genealogy. Instead, subjectivity is multiple; the "I" is entangled; and self is just an offshoot of an otherwise rhizomatic field. This means that not only do the table and I have distinct affective capacities, despite being one and the same in being, but our variations or differenciations of being exist only through our entanglement with one another. My elastic skin sits on the hard face of the table—its surface having a different expression to the hardback books that lay beside my arms. Likewise, my elastic skin unfolds as sharp and hard when I poke a finger through a soap bubble, or it expresses as a layered porosity when a needle glides through it, drawing blood from the blue vein within.

For our genderqueer selves, univocity shifts the frame of identity from one of diversity to one of duration. This means that rather than taking difference as our starting point (L-G-B-T-Q) we might do well to think of gender and sexuality as durational (anticipated harmony notes in a many-part chorus). More clearly, this could be the difference between obsessing over *who* and in what *way* one desires, and using that as a basis for identity (i.e. I desire women so I am a lesbian), and instead taking the fact that as desiring *beings*, we are directed toward various others in expressions of longing, dislike, affection, and want, and that these affects are as much a part of our expressed gender as they are a part of our limbs, hormones, genitals, skin. As well, it is through our experiences as desiring beings that we come to know our opaque selves.

The criticism, of course, is that if we flatten the differences between gender, sexuality, sex, and other distinct "pieces" of identity, then we fail to account for the differences in experience, or much more importantly, that we are entirely disloyal to the power differences that impact and shape us. For example, a politic that collapses gender and sexuality, fails to see the nuances between being gay in Toronto, Canada and being transgender in Sokol, Russia.

Unfortunately, our anxieties about doing away with identity categories entirely are bound up in the fact that we live to tell linear tales, that is, we require progress narratives that reinforce the hetero-patriarchal modes in which we subjectivize, name, colonize, and identify one another. Thinking being as univocal, and gender and sexuality as durational means that desire, expression, gender, affection, and even anatomy, are just various unfoldings of a spatio-temporal becoming. This is contrary to the politics of identity which focuses on a variety of unique differences as they comingle; this is contrary to a performative subjectivity, made only in the *doing* that has been the north star of queer theory for the last 30 years. And this even diverges from intersectionality, which Jasbir Puar argues relies on a stable fixing of identity across space and time through its need for a logic of equivalence and analogy.[76] Making a case for queerness as assemblage, Puar determines that intersectionality relies too heavily on its component parts (race, class, sexuality, nation, gender), whereas the assemblage is made up of "mutually implicated and messy networks" which operate through organic and nonorganic forces.[77] Puar also describes this move to thinking race and sex (along with other identities) as *events*, rather than static categories. This means that they are no longer tied to a particular subject *position,* but instead expressions of a world that is primarily one of process after all. In this way, Puar's terrorist assemblages are a "cacophony of informational flows, energetic intensities, bodies, and practices that undermine coherent identity . . . and by-pass entirely the Foucauldian 'act-to-identity' continuum that informs much global LGBTIQ organizing."[78]

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[76] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, 212.
[77] Puar, 211.
[78] Puar, 222.

Returning to the acronym example, if we were to approach the situation through a durational univocity, first of all, it wouldn't be helpful to just throw out the entire acronym on account of its solidification of particular identities, because this thoroughly shuts down the potentialities of the project.[79] Instead we might want to look at the situation according to those outcomes that multiply intensity and those that limit intensity. For example, does the ever-expanding acronym open up possibilities for expressions of sexuality? Yes, in some ways it does: it provides a space for people to find a sense of belonging and support. Does it limit such expressions? Yes, the very delineations of "straight," "lesbian," or "gay" have acted as the structural determinations of how one understands oneself and consequently how one expresses oneself at the expense of other possibilities. The mere addition of other "types" to the list, then, remains caught within this territorializing paradigm. Puar might describe this as a tool of "diversity management" such that when identities are so easily cleaved we remain fixated on positioning ourselves within specific locales and fixed timelines.[80] This ensures that we do not see subjectivity as durational (as an unfolding process) and that we continue with processes of "excavation, restoration, and visibility" rather than upheavals of the unquestioned ground.[81] Instead we might want to look at things like: what possibilities does a practice of *coming in* engender? What possibilities of expression are enabled when a family works diligently, bravely, fiercely to raise a child without pronouns? Or how do the hauntings of our queer archives give us both shoes of cement and wings toward flight?

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[79] This is tantamount to using a sledgehammer rather than a fine file, as Deleuze and Guattari indicate in *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*, 177. By this they are referring to the difficulty inherent in any attempts at desubjectification, and that caution that is needed.
[80] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*, 212.
[81] Puar, 212.

This means that what I am calling my own queerness is not some inherent essence of sexuality or desire, nor am I the mere product of technologies of power as they enclose upon me. I am instead an interplay between social, technological, biological, and cultural factors and the key is not to gloss over each contributing factor, as this is not just an act of hand-waving at multiplicity, but an acknowledgement of differenciation. The social makes sexuality through inclusions and exclusions, through memories of a friend leaning in with curiosity when I come out and anticipations of another going cold and stiff. Each of these experiences (even those yet to come) act on the present as I gauge my audience, position my body, or select a location for the "event." The technological makes sexuality through various reproductive technologies as they serve and do not serve queer couples looking to reproduce. Queer families are made and understood through adoption, acquiring sperm from friends and sperm banks, or tens of thousands of dollars' worth of debt for those that venture into surrogacy and in-vitro. The biological makes sexuality through the gendered coding of genitalia, it also does so through discoveries of the complex sexes, biologies, sexualities, and expressions that show up in animals, plants, and nature, as Joan Roughgarden has discussed in *Evolution's Rainbow*.[82] Lastly, just as each of these is an unfolding differenciation and not a unique *affect*, culture is influenced by nature, sociality, and technology as it ebbs and flows throughout all aspects of production.

To think of selfhood and this ephemeral and fierce thing called identity in this way is to embrace an onto-epistemological shift in understanding.[83] The shift is ontological in the sense that *being* must be rethought according to an embodied and contingent framework, and

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[82] Joan Roughgarden, *Evolution's Rainbow: Diversity, Gender, and Sexuality in Nature and People* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 2004).
[83] Karen Barad uses the phrase "onto-epistem-ology" to indicate that being and knowledge are inseparable (see 2007, 185).

epistemological because the meanings and knowledges we associate with bodies are also the product of these relations. Consequently, Jason Collins' performative speech act as the first openly gay athlete operates within an embedded apparatus, one which includes, among other things, the sporting environment he is a part of (from advertising to uniforms), the material anxieties that surround the queer sporting body, and the marking of the male as the universal human subject, a marking which overwrites a history of female athletes. All of these factors contribute to the intelligibility of Collins' newly queer *life*, and his anticipated path toward self-actualization.

While we tend to trace the telltale signs of queerness to a known "identity," or to read the lack of signs as indication of an even deeper closet, even greater artifice, the durational, univocal subject works to destabilize a structural understanding of signs and symbols as referents to an elusive ideal. For, in fact, there is no "real," no queer, no lesbian, no gay man to which one's behaviours do or do not refer, there is only an entangled bodily comportment, not unlike that confluence of forces that makes up the event. Put more philosophically, life is always a radical immanence so that: "there is no inside/outside, no origin and end."[84] There is no gap between the sign and its referent, between culture and nature that allows us to read a biological body apart from its entanglement within various systems of language, feelings, and politics. And although I draw on Deleuze for this argument, it is not his argument to make, for the absolute entanglement of matter and meaning, self and other, the "you" and the "I" is as old as it gets. Deleuze attributes univocity to Duns Scotus, Spinoza, and Nietzsche[85]—but we can also find echoes of durational univocity (a living present) in Indigenous worldviews and philosophy, in Buddhist and Taoist

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[84] Tuin, "The New Materialist 'Always Already,'" 288.
[85] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35–41.

teachings.[86] Each of these exemplify the case that "the self does not stop with just you, with your body. The self penetrates other things and they penetrate you."[87]

This is the living present. By collapsing a structural understanding of the subject, so reconfiguring not only the teleological "coming-out" narrative, but also the monomythic and retroactive temporality which makes a coherent queer subject, we can understand the event as one among many; as an opening onto the multiple ruptures which occurred in my childhood, adulthood, adolescence. These ruptures, as spatially-situated (my thrilling and terrifying first visit to Diva's Gay Bar) and temporally affective (the contraction that takes place every time I see—or think of—the back-alley entrance), serve as memorials to past fears, and open upon a present queer self that moves joyfully ahead. I am not denying that there is a retroactive telling that will inevitably happen, nor that there is not value in remembering those moments when I did not adhere to heteronormativity, or when I was afraid, but those moments are not mine alone. To adhere to an origin story that retells my life according to a closeted queer identity is to stagnate and solidify the many events that were already rupturing a normative timeline, the events that are stagnated just as much by a queer identity as they are by a heterosexual identity. The myth that one can actually "come out" only once, erases the hundreds of times that one must continue to negotiate awkward phone calls, heteronormative assumptions, and hence, must come out again and again and again.

This "uneasy and erratic becoming" *queer* is relational movement. It is a future that remembers and a thick time that remakes the past in the present. This becoming-queer pays no

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[86] See Rifkin, *Beyond Settler Time: Temporal Sovereignty and Indigenous Self-Determination*; Melissa K. Nelson, *Original Instructions: Indigenous Teachings for a Sustainable Future* (Simon and Schuster, 2008); Tony See, "Deleuze and Buddhism: Two Concepts of Subjectivity?," *Deleuze and Guattari Studies* 13, no. 1 (2019): 104–22.

[87] Gloria Anzaldua, as quoted in Mikko Tuhkanen, "Mestiza Metaphysics," in *Queer Times, Queer Becomings* (New York: State University of New York, 2011), 162.

heed to realizing and actualizing the self; it "does not flourish into presence, but bears a capacity to annihilate itself, to refuse its *ownness,*" as Colebrook writes in "Queer Aesthetics."[88] For becoming-queer is to never arrive. It is an opening up to Deleuze and Guattari's thousand tiny sexes, but a refusal to name a single one. Although the coming out narrative will continue to have temporal weight in a rights-based moral economy, a Deleuzian (non) subject demonstrates that indeed, to "come out" is not to open the door on a life that has been closeted, but rather it is an encounter between a life and a set of material forces that always have the potential to overcome the self-as-subject-of-desire. To queer time, then, is to refuse to make a life, any life, structurally coherent, for the potential for becoming-otherwise only works when a queer life is an event out-of-time.

[88] Colebrook, "Queer Aesthetics," 31.

FOUR

Thick Time: Echoes of the Future

Every text is a time capsule and a time machine, containing the present, but sending the present into a future that the present cannot control.

—Claire Colebrook, "The Anthropocene and the Archive"

The most important thing to know about prehistoric humans is that they were insignificant animals with no more impact on their environment than gorillas, fireflies, or jellyfish.

—Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens*

Imagine you are back in your high school biology classroom.[1] The walls are lined with charts, maps, and pictures of flora and fauna. There's a pet turtle at the back of the room in an old aquarium and a row of dusty glass jars holding insects, reptiles, and eyeballs suspended in clear jelly. There may be a poster of Darwin's species of finches from *On the Origin of Species* on the wall, or maybe even the iconic image that shows human evolution from apes (figure 4). A blue and green globe sits idly on your teacher's desk, used more to play the game of "where will I live when I grow up" than for geographic education.

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[1] Sections of this chapter are taken from and inspired by my short article titled "Environment Imagining Otherwise," *Journal of Curriculum and Pedagogy* 10, no. 1 (June 1, 2013): 34–37.

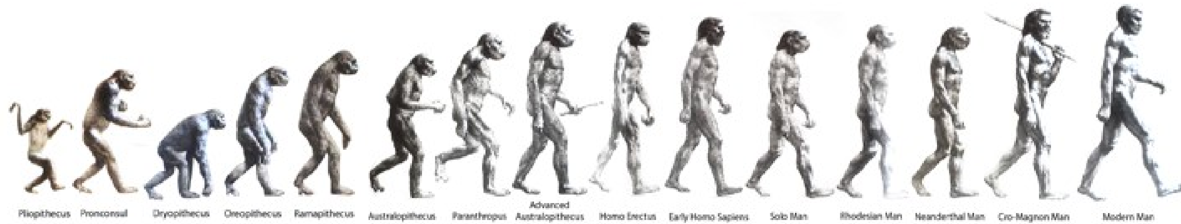

Figure 4: The Linear Evolution of "Man"

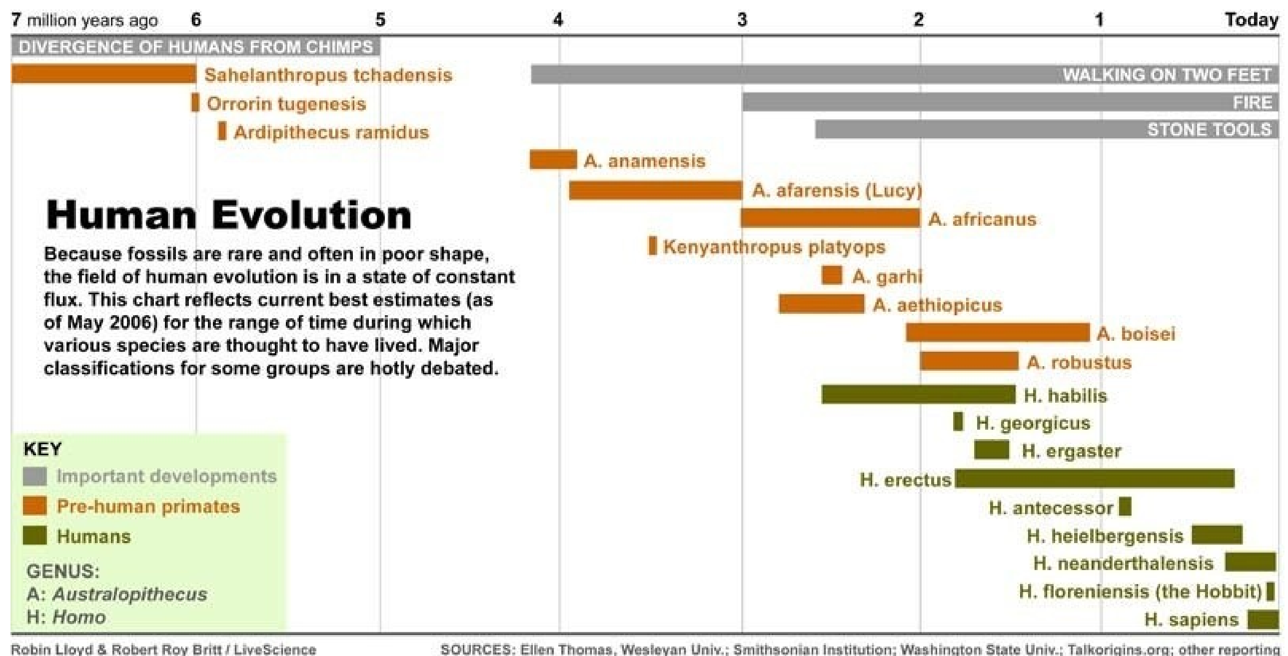

Figure 5: Human Evolution

Though it is far from a tidy tale, "man's" evolution is often presented according to the linear pathway in figure 4, whereby an ape reaches progressively upward until he is standing upright, his arms have shortened, his legs lengthened, and his civility has been sufficiently archived. In this map, evolution is a series of stages. Pre-"man" is Australopithecus, who overlaps slightly with homo habilis, all the way to "modern man": homo sapiens. The progression is cumulative as "man" evolves, acquires skills, and creates tools. This arborescent model is familiar to us, it satisfies our longings for progress and our addictions to the hero's

journey. The more interesting thing, however, is that rather than representing a single species, or a lone hero, as recently as 100,000 years ago there were possibly six different species of the genus *homo* that lived in different parts of the earth *at the same time.* In a popular nonfiction book called *Sapiens*, Yuval Noah Harari disrupts the fable of the mono-species by tracing the timelines of many species of what we now call *human*, and in so doing, Harari weaves rhizomatic webs instead of arborescent trees. In *A Thousand Plateaus*, Deleuze and Guattari contrast arborescence with the rhizome, where the former refers to theories and ideas that are built like a tree: from the ground up, while the latter form webs and random growths, like the roots of strawberries or grass. The difference is the creation of vertical and hierarchical ideas in the case of arborescent thought systems and horizontal and decentred systems in the case of the rhizome.[2] Harari's popular nonfiction text is far from a scientific study, but he is not wrong in his multiplication of the species *homo*, nor in his claim that early clans of human beings were no different than a smack of jellyfish or a herd of giraffes in terms of environmental and intra-animal impact. It wasn't until somewhere between 30,000-12,000 years ago that homo sapiens began to make a name for themselves. Whether through uses of language, social patterns, the development of more sophisticated tools, or their swift rise from the middle to the top of the food chain, humans started to take steps toward industry, economic systems, infrastructure, and capitalism.

Today, "man's" pinnacle position is a given. Not only are we the masters of time, history, and language, but we increasingly think about the world as a global landscape. In many ways this is valuable, as we can trace the impacts of garbage that has been dumped into the Atlantic Ocean

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[2] Deleuze and Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus: Capitalism and Schizophrenia*.

for fifty years to the rising temperatures and increased acidity of the Mediterranean Sea. At the same time, it is dangerous as it breeds apathy in our day-to-day choices; if we are just one among millions, what can our actions really matter? Hopefully our knowledge of widespread human impact on the earth gives us pause, but more likely it reinforces the sense that the small spinning desk globe from our high school biology classes is merely our plaything; the world is small and in the global landscape, it is seemingly within our grasp.

I bring up these old stories about evolution because so many of the stories that we tell, the histories that we make, and the futures we create are bound up in our grand human ego. We fixate on our capacity for rational thought, opposable thumbs, the ability to walk upright, self-awareness, propensity toward cooperation, and our mastery of fire, as skills and characteristics that set us apart, but remember that we also have the "dubious distinction of being the deadliest species in the annals of biology."[3] Harari and many climate change philosophers have spent a great deal of time flattening the landscape and reminding us that homo sapiens are just one species among many.[4] Not only are we one human species among many non-human species, but throughout earth's duration we are just one human species among many others, and many that lived much longer than homo sapiens is likely to live (figure 5). Perhaps more than any other topic I have discussed in this dissertation, the landscape of evolution, human and geological history, and the lightning fast (and terribly slow) speeds of climate change are indications of the need for both an apparatus of the living present and relatedly for a renewed relationship to *time.*

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[3] Yuval Noah Harari, *Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind* (McClelland & Stewart, 2014), 74.

[4] Tom Cohen, Claire Colebrook, and J. Hillis Miller, *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols* (London: Open Humanities Press, 2016); Claire Colebrook, "The Anthropocene and the Archive," *The Memory Network*, 2014, http://thememorynetwork.net/the-anthropocene-and-the-archive/; Dipesh Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses," *Critical Inquiry*, no. 35 (2009): 197–222; Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self.*

In most of today's contemporary "climate change imaginary" as Tom Cohen describes it, we are caught between the desire to save or sustain an abstract "environment" and a tendency toward denial or a deflection of environmental concerns.[5] The former may be enacted through alarm bells about decreasing populations of the honeybee and satisfied by our efforts to eat locally or to purchase honey that has been marked with a label of "sustainable," while the latter comes into play when the warnings reach their tipping point, when our imagined potential to *act* gives way to derealization and apathy. *I am not responsible. I cannot do anything to change this*. The parallel operations of each of these projects, however, construct "climate" as something far away, disconnected from our everyday experiences, and they indicate that rather than imagining (and creating) new possibilities for thinking about and engaging with *earth, climate, history,* we are often bound by anticipations of a future that is already determined.

This politics of futurity is directly connected to the language of sustainability, the framing of efforts to *sustain* or *maintain* the earth's ability to meet the needs of future generations. And although the stamp of "sustainable produce" whets the whistle of a growing population of young, upwardly mobile adults, a critical understanding of what constitutes sustainability, or rather, sustainable development, remains absent. Not only does sustainable development assume the "inexhaustibility of natural resources," but alongside warnings of glacial melt, endangered animal populations, and the loss of plant species, it endorses a view of nature as the fixed and external milieu against which human beings construct and maintain civilization.[6] The ubiquitous "environment" is perceived as outside of and beyond us, and it is clear that to *sustain* is to *hold*

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[5] Tom Cohen, "Anecographics," in *Impasses of the Post-Global: Theory in the Era of Climate Change*, ed. Henry Sussman (University of Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2012), 50.
[6] Robert Markley, "Time," in *Telemorphosis: Theory in the Era of Climate Change*, ed. Tom Cohen, vol. 1 (University of Michigan: Open Humanities Press, 2012), 85.

up a world reliant on liberal humanism's firm dichotomy between human and nonhuman, a world in which human civilization is able to prosper.

But what if nature is "neither a passive surface awaiting the mark of culture," nor "the end product of cultural performances" as Karen Barad writes?[7] What if the processes of a multi-species *materiality*—homo sapiens, homo erectus, bodies, plants, highways, discarded bottles—are creative in the makings and unmakings of this thing we call "climate change," this thing we call "world"? Donna Haraway's naturecultures have long indicated this entanglement, as they illustrate the co-constitutive relationships between the imagined categories of "nature" and "culture."[8] We began to explore this relationship in chapter three as we diffracted the subject within queer temporalities. Building on Haraway's naturecultures, Barad has enlivened our understandings of matter by making visible the quantum enactments of materiality, that is, the way that material particles do not pre-exist the encounter with an objective observer, but rather come into being/meaning through the dynamism of a relational interaction.[9] I will explain Barad's materialist project in greater detail later in this chapter, but for now, each of these developments demonstrate that our anthropocentric framings of nature always enact a violence as they position the human subject as the pole around which ecology is ordered. This model ensures that "nature" itself has no agential role in the climate change imaginary, to which Cohen gestures, or put another way, this ensures that earth, land, and sky have no agential roles in our dreams of a future that is otherwise.

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[7] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*, 183.
[8] Donna Haraway, *When Species Meet* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008).
[9] Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*.

Now, I cannot transcend this human body, assembled of flesh, bones, and thoughts that I take to be my own, so I cannot represent the thoughts of naturecultures, *or the practices of the honeybee*, any more than I can assume that my white, academic ponderings on climate are at all relevant to another's lived experience. But I can *imagine* collaborative rhizomes that try to invert, upset, or otherwise trouble a human-centred approach. I am also reminded that we have been here before and we will be here again; there is no "new," there is only an eternal *differenciating* return. In order to explore the thick time of climate change, and to see the impacts of a thick time on our living present, we must reorient the frames through which we ordinarily construct meaning about earth. This involves talking about our environments, climates, and even our naturecultures in ways that dig deeper than causal crisis narratives and it involves changing the ways in which we frame and differentiate between things, beings, time, and space.

To begin this conversation, I describe this anticipatory politic as an "echo of the future." An echo, in this context, is a powerful contraction of the past that opens upon unknowable futures. One such echo is the Anthropocene, a potential new epoch that scientists are presently debating. I map both the scientific and philosophical engenderings of the Anthropocene as it is already at play in our naturecultures, noting the ways that it demonstrates the entanglement of matter and meaning. In a very material sense it represents the geographical time-scale that is as much a part of our time telling (and history making) as it is part of the futures we are creating. Following this macro discussion, I turn to a variety of micro-politics, including the political nature of our bodies-of-water, the input of feminist new materialisms into novel imaginings of climate and culture, and even the impending overpopulation of jellyfish as both a queer and a present *danger*. By way of these macro and micro politics, I am able to diffract conversations about climate with bodies, knowledges and environmentalisms as they serve as powerful

contractions *(echoes?)* of a thick materialist temporality. As I will demonstrate, this durational echo demonstrates that the future can never be "new," that is, the future can never be produced in a vacuum, it is deeply connected to the conditions that lead to its emergence, the material pasts that are layered within any experience (the eternal return that cycles us back to the hero's journey, again and again). As this chapter will demonstrate, both the actual events of climate change and the discourse surrounding it (as if these aren't already entirely connected) serve as clarifying examples for a methodology of the living present as a means by which to look, listen, and learn from a durational time. Further, this chapter demonstrates that the future is always an echo; it is a contraction of the past and a thickening of the present in its work of creating futures unknown.

Echoes of the Anthropocene

> And at once, I knew I was not magnificent.
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> –Bon Iver, "Holocene"

Thinking the "new" is no stranger to philosophy. We are addicted to new technologies, new bodies, new theories, new models, a new epoch, a new *earth*. The map of "man's" evolution satisfies this desire with its ever-forward movement, its figure that transforms from mere animal to civilized being. This *being* stands upright, is taller than the rest, and no longer carries a weapon, for his weapon is his mind. There is often a sense of longing that accompanies our want of the new: maybe the future will be more interesting, compelling, unique, we wonder. Maybe it will ease our pain, lessen our burdens. Ultimately the new is inspiring not because it is unknown, but because it is a reprieve. *There is a future that we haven't even thought of yet. There are possibilities beyond our present and past imaginations. There is hope.*

The call for the new surfaces in most writing around climate change, such as Melissa Nelson, who reminds us that "we cannot solve our global crisis with the same thought process that created it," a phrase which contracts Einstein's famous "we cannot solve our problems with the same thinking we used when we created them," and diffracts Audre Lorde's "the master's tools will never dismantle the master's house."[10] This game of repetition and difference reminds us that the sensationalized fears of climate change, global pollution, and overpopulation are translated into a discourse of global crisis. As well, they echo philosophical and scientific scholars around the world who are increasingly calling for a paradigmatic shift in the way we view the relationship between human beings and the natural world, given that our current methods only offer the same outcomes *over and over again*. So, what if what we call "new" is instead an echo? The eternal return of the same? Because thinking about an echo, alongside this urgency, reminds us that calls for paradigmatic shifts in thinking are not *new*. Talk of needing to renew the relationship between human beings and the natural world is not *new*. Arguments that hierarchical, neo-liberal ideologies govern environmental, social, and political policies globally and will continue to perpetuate inequities between different cultures, between humans and nature, and between humans and non-human animals if they carry on the way that they are, *are not new.* And yet, we hope that the alternatives will be "new," "unthought," "transformative." We hinge our hopeful hearts on the possibility that the future will be unlike the present, and even less like the past, and yet, we continue to repeat without difference.

The echo is a contraction of the past. *All pasts.* At the same time, an echo stretches forward as it reverberates an eternal return through its repetition. *An eternal return that is only*

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[10] Nelson, *Original Instructions*, 11; Lorde, "The Master's Tools Will Never Dismantle the Master's House."

the return of difference. An echo of the future, then, is both the anticipatory politic that fixes our timeline and the novel event that Deleuze's third synthesis of time promises us. As we stretch out along timelines that are short (the lifecycle of a honeybee) and long (the 22-million-year life cycle of stratigraphic rock formations), we engage with various speeds and slownesses, various temporal events as they change our spatial landscape. Throughout this, we also recognize that, on account of the historic linguistic gaps between "nature" and "culture," *ecological echoes may well be the hardest to hear.*

Today we are in the epoch known as the *Holocene*. The Holocene followed the last ice age, and throughout its nearly 12,000-year lifespan, it has provided a relatively stable incubation for the proliferation of humans, plants, and animals. That said, as I type this sentence, the world stage is holding its breath in anticipation of a new epoch within the Geological Time Scale. This epoch is the *Anthropocene*, and although it is the subject of hundreds of scientific articles and arguments, the term has been popularized primarily within philosophy and critical theory as it presents rich fodder for political and ethical conversations. Scientists define the Anthropocene as the age of human impact, such that geologists and stratigraphers are now able to measure anthropocentric processes as they have added to Earth's landscape.[11] The term was coined by Eugene Stoermer in the 1980s, and gained traction through its use by Paul Crutzen and Stoermer in the early 2000s.[12] Although Crutzen and Stoermer originally dated its inception to 1784—the invention of the coal-fueled steam engine—the Working Group on the Anthropocene charts its emergence within the middle of the 20th century, the dawn of the nuclear age.[13]

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[11] Jan Zalasiewicz et al., "Making the Case for a Formal Anthropocene Epoch: An Analysis of Ongoing Critiques," *Newsletters on Stratigraphy* 5, no. 2 (2017): 208.

[12] Paul Crutzen and Eugene Stoermer, "The Anthropocene," *Global Change Newsletters* 41 (2000): 17–18; Paul Crutzen, "Geology of Mankind," *Nature* 415 (2002): 23.

[13] Zalasiewicz et al., "Making the Case for a Formal Anthropocene Epoch."

When scientists say that the proposed Anthropocene marks human changes to Earth's landscape they are not referring only to the warming of our atmosphere (and glacial melts) or to Northern wastelands where resource extraction has ravaged the land and ecosystems are not able to re-root. They are referring to the layers of plastic, microplastics, discarded metal and bricks, that have *become* part of our stratigraphic layers. There are rocks forming on the coasts of Hawaii that are called plastiglomerates and are made up of fused molten plastics, basalt clasts, and coral fragments.[14] The proliferation of dams across rivers means that riverbeds are sediment-starved and their composite layers lack stable material entirely and cannot physically support the increased water flows from glacial melts.[15] And the combinations of over-fishing and warming sea temperatures has meant that jellyfish are reproducing at record-breaking rates.[16] So, riverbeds are washing away, Hawaiian beaches are *becoming-plastic*, and jellyfish are plotting world-domination, all indicating that the Anthropocene is not only a record of "man's" devastation of the earth, but of our human-made materials becoming a part of the natural ground beneath our feet, the air that we breathe, the water that we drink. This fusing of nature-technology-culture-biology is the ultimate spatial-temporal-material entanglement, though it is much less a site of wonder and awe than it is one of terror.

Despite its widespread use within scientific, cultural, and political texts, formal adoption of the Anthropocene as a geological time-period (thus indicating the end of the Holocene) requires scientific justification in the form of a clear stratigraphic sign reflected in the geological

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[14] See Zalasiewicz et al., 212.

[15] Colin N. Waters et al., "The Anthropocene Is Functionally and Stratigraphically Distinct from the Holocene," *Science* 351, no. 6269 (January 8, 2016), http://science.sciencemag.org/content/351/6269/aad2622.

[16] Celia, "Jellyfish Overpopulation – A Threat To The Oceans?," *Marine Science Today* (blog), 2009, http://marinesciencetoday.com/2009/06/11/jellyfish-overpopulation-a-threat-to-the-oceans/; Richard Stone, "Massive Outbreak of Jellyfish Could Spell Trouble for Fisheries," *Yale Environment 360* (blog), January 13, 2011, https://e360.yale.edu/features/massive_outbreak_of_jellyfish_could_spell_trouble_for_fisheries.

timescale. There is an anticipatory angle to the debates about instantiating a new epoch, as they evaluate the Anthropocene on whether or not geologists (thousands or millions of years in the future) will be able to look back to see a human trace. What a curious yardstick. To think that an age, which is predictively bringing about mass extinction to animals, plants, and fauna, and most likely, all of humanity, can only exist if it can be determined that it will be recognized by mythical geologists *to come.* Though of course the geological timeline has only ever been read retroactively, as already formed. And although origin stories for various timescales are very much a part of our present, the boundary-making of a new epoch has never aligned with a calendar date that living humans have themselves crossed. *And likewise, the death of an epoch has never occurred simultaneously with our written history.*

In a mock obituary *Time* magazine remembers the Holocene epoch as a "warm, stable climate" that made possible the "flourishing of Homo Sapiens." Its accomplishments included a hospitable climate for plant and animal life, as well as the invention of writing, while its fallbacks include the extinction of the woolly mammoth and widespread deforestation.[17] The *Time* article's levity counteracts the intense debate that wages around the adoption of the Anthropocene, as another argument centers on the fact that we can't move to another epoch because we haven't had enough *time* to measure it (its physical manifestation is too small). A shift to the Anthropocene would drastically shorten the Holocene's lifespan, which, at only 11,650 years, is much younger than its ancestors—the Pleistocene lasted 2.5 million years, while the Eocene was 22 million years long. Again we are confronted with various measures, speeds and slows as evaluations of the Anthropocene's validity hinge largely upon how *fast* it has

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[17] Chris Wilson, "Obituary: Remembering the Holocene Epoch," *Time*, August 9, 2016, http://time.com/4471327/holocene-epoch-end-anthropocene/.

impacted the earth, thus demonstrating by default that the slow and stable movements of the earlier Holocene are preferable. Somehow human "intervention" has "sped up" the timeline, but no one is asking to whose timeline we defer.

Today, geologists, stratigraphers, and environmentalists haven't levied a final verdict on the Anthropocene, but that hasn't stopped (and has likely encouraged) philosophers from employing the term in full force. Bringing the scientific and literary longings in line, Claire Colebrook asserts that we are propelled forward through imaginings of a present-made-future whereby "we might then imagine our own present, our own self-archiving as if it were already being read by non-humans, beyond our own existence."[18] Anticipation of a post-humanity to come (just as the geologist-to-come) impacts our archive (and our science) and philosophers recognize the ethical potential for such an anticipatory rupture as it brings us face to face with the best and the worst of ourselves. Andrew Revkin writes:

> Some will see this period as a "shame on us" moment. Others will deride this effort as a hubristic overstatement of human powers. Some will argue for the importance of living smaller and leaving no scars. Others will revel in human dominion as a normal and natural part of our journey as a species."[19]

Thus, the imagining (and therefore creating) of a new Anthropocentric epoch is both humiliating and egomaniacal. But what is more telling is that the Anthropocene forces us to face *nature* as no longer the background against which culture dances and turns; as it demonstrates whatever happens "'sticks' with us, like Styrofoam cups or plastic bags," as David Chandler writes in

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[18] Colebrook, "The Anthropocene and the Archive."

[19] Andrew C. Revkin, "Confronting the 'Anthropocene,'" *Dot Earth Blog* (blog), May 11, 2011, https://dotearth.blogs.nytimes.com/2011/05/11/confronting-the-anthropocene/.

Ontopolotics in the Anthropocene.[20] Nature is no longer an "outside" or an "away," as the supposedly "fixed" natural laws have clearly never been fixed and further, the perceived autonomy of politics and culture has been nothing but a hopeful dream, given the heated political import of plastiglomerates and jellyfish attack.[21] What this shows us is that we are well beyond the point of "purity," the topsy turvy world(s) of the Anthropocene actually overthrows our progress-oriented politics, despite desperate grabs at order. Our messy, devastating, and often hopeless present provides a continual reminder that we are always "in the middle of things"; there will be no end to climate change, just as there was no beginning. What really matters is our ability to better understand our complex and multiple present accountabilities within an otherwise incomprehensible process of change.

The Anthropocene may be terrifying, but more than anything before, it demonstrates that humans, trees, air, texts, and even plastiglomerates are all time-bodies. Remembering that time-bodies are the embodied recognition that we (rocks, tables, humans, woolly mammoths) are the *makers of time.* In its most prolific uptake outside of scientific circles, the Anthropocene has been the justification for a "new" materialism (or the "material turn" as described in chapter three above), whereby it arguably provides material evidence for the entanglements of human-nature-meaning-climate. This field has been dominated by feminist and queer scholars as a more exhaustive feminist argument does not simply fight for personhood (first wave) or for equal rights between two genders (second wave), nor even for intersectional inclusion of multiple forms of structural power (the Butlerian-Foucauldian third wave). Feminist materialisms draw together may of the topics we have discussed so far in this project such as a linear time and its

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[20] David Chandler, *Ontopolotics in the Anthropocene: An Introduction to Mapping, Sensing and Hacking* (London & New York: Routledge, 2018), 6.
[21] Chandler, *Ontopolotics in the Anthropocene: An Introduction to Mapping, Sensing and Hacking*.

control of the past and the future, the pre-eminence of the text and its failure to write *life*, and the anthropocentrism of culture and its denial that being is univocal.

LIFE AND EXTINCTION: ON THE MATERIAL TURN

Some have described the material turn as an investigation into "life itself."[22] However, the phrase "life itself" is tricky here, as it does not mean a strict return to some inherent essence of "aliveness" or "pure existence" but instead it includes examination of the processes and effects of corporeal bodies and organisms as they integrate with ideas, politics, and ideologies. Nikolas Rose's influential study *The Politics of Life Itself* investigates how biopolitics and practices of *biopower* have changed the way that we understand the human in relationship to biology and new technologies.[23] Rose draws on Foucault's *biopower*, which refers simply to *power over bodies*, but also includes the complicated mechanisms by which we control, police, subjugate, and order bodies and populations.[24] As it connects to biopolitics, biopower has been the means by which eugenics and forced sterilizations have taken place, but it has also been the driving force behind preventative medicine and public health initiatives. Each of these operations rely on the goal of protecting and managing *life*, above all else, but the key is that said *life* is not indiscriminately protected. Biopower protects a specific type of body, it evaluates what is and is not an acceptable life, and it anticipates a future population that is shaped and defined by the loaded terms of "health," "vitality," and "well-being."

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[22] Nikolas S. Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself: Biomedicine, Power, and Subjectivity in the Twenty-First Century* (Princeton University Press, 2007), See; Braidotti, "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying."
[23] Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself.*
[24] Foucault, *History of Sexuality: An Introduction*, 140.

Rose discusses biopower alongside new technologies, distinguishing between a molar level understanding of the body, with its visible and tangible limbs and organs and a molecular biopolitics where life is now imagined as "sub-cellular processes and events."[25] In other words, biotechnologies (and their biopowers) have ensured that "life" is no longer some sort of "natural life" that we can examine, classify, and pathologize, nor is it a healthy equilibrium to which we can return. By molecularizing our identities into genetic codes and turning health into a manipulable cellular configuration, biotechnologies have effectively "[changed] what it is to be human."[26] As Rose describes it, the effects of these technologies ensure that otherwise "natural" processes are now deemed to be one possibility within a range of possibilities such as reshaping the aging process through hormone replacement, or reconfiguring sexuality through Viagra.[27] Such technological advances have meant that the very definition of life is changing, and thus, biotechnologies are much more than answers to health problems and instead themselves technologies of life, just as anthropogenic technofossils are not simply a trace of humanity *left behind*, but themselves the material of the natural world. Effectively, these examples demonstrate that our world is already a combination of social-cultural-science-matter and such a world relies on a view of material-as-subject, rather than object. The material turn, then, is a misnomer, as we have been material all along. That said, as we will see in a later section, this materiality has been kept out of conversations about meaning *and* mattering. But before we enter the philosophical arguments surrounding "new materialism" let's look at a closer example of biopower and its entangled naturecultures.

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[25] Rose, *The Politics of Life Itself*, 14.
[26] Landecker, as quoted in Rose, 17.
[27] Rose, 17.

There are longstanding absences of potable water in many First Nations in Northern Saskatchewan. Places like Clearwater River Dene Nation has had a boil water advisory since 2006, while White Bear First Nation has had an advisory since 2011. In 2010, the United Nations passed Resolution 64/292 which indicated that access to clean water and sanitation were human rights. The UN called on international aid organizations to support initiatives to provide clean and affordable drinking water in developing countries, as well as for developed countries to ensure that they were meeting this right in their own nations. When we look at the context in Canada, aid organizations such as WaterAid, WaterCan, and WaterKeepers, spend millions of dollars building wells in developing nations and yet, as of 2018, we still have 67 First Nations in Canada with boil water advisories. Given that there are 634 recognized First Nations communities in Canada, this means that more than ten percent of these are without potable water.

This is largely a colonial tale as the “right to water” is granted to white settlers, city-dwellers, the affluent, the recognized. I do not need to make the argument that Indigenous people are disenfranchised in Canada, for it is a widely known fact, but I do need to draw attention to the ways in which Canada enacts the very same neoliberal savior narrative that we bemoan of our neighbours to the South (as per chapter two’s relay of Bush’s “just war” as salvation for the women of Afghanistan). In July 2017, Carolyn Bennett, Canada’s Minister of Crown-Indigenous Relations made an announcement that the Canadian Government was investing 9.2 million dollars into the water system at White Bear First Nation, following on the heels of Prime Minister Trudeau’s promise to eliminate all boil water advisories in Canada. As a result, the White Knight (Trudeau) rides in with a gift that is already a human right of the White Bear First Nation’s residents, and in so doing, ensures that the gift of progress and “development” remains in the hands of the crown. Such a model maintains not only hierarchies of race, class, nation, and

location, but also boundaries between human and water, nature and culture, for it does not recognize the *affect* of water itself within such a complicated socio-natural-political terrain.

For example, despite its being a "human right," water is not an inert substance. It is not a "thing" to which we can lay claim, ownership, occupation. Water is embedded in every living, growing being. Water pummels the plastics that form our new plastiglomerates, it is the "air" for our jellyfish, it can destroy an entire city in one tsunamic wave. Water is our lifeblood and we are always already *wet* with our own watery embodiment. In *Bodies of Water*, Astrida Neimanis describes this entanglement: "Blood, bile, intracellular fluid; a small ocean swallowed, a wild wetland in our gut; rivulets forsaken making their way from our insides to out, from watery womb to watery world: *we are bodies of water.*"[28] There is no separation between bodies-and-water and so any conversations about access to water are transcorporeal conversations. In fact, there may be a greater awareness of concepts such as *sustain, endure, maintain,* or *conserve,* for those who navigate an absence of water's free flow, and so someone who has to boil water daily, or buy water in jugs, has a much more intimate relationship with water than someone who has limitless access. For residents of White Bear First Nation, water is a privilege, not a right. It costs money, it takes time, it requires planning and upkeep. Water also shapes relationships and well-being as its absence has the impacts of dehydration and sickness, while its presence is a sign of racism and exclusion. We do not need to rely only on examples from new biotechnologies in order to understand the affective power of matter, for we *are* only and ever made of matter, *and land, and water, and air.*

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[28] Astrida Neimanis, *Bodies of Water: Posthuman Feminist Phenomenology* (Bloomsbury Publishing, 2017), 1.

I do want to acknowledge that explorations of the “life” and “affect” of water, or any materiality, cannot avoid a distinctly vitalist bent. Within Western science, “vitalism” refers to early 19th century beliefs that “there must exist a life principle that (sometimes) animated matter, which was not itself material.”[29] Taken up by Hans Driesch as entelechy (borrowed from Aristotle, and indicative of an intensive life force) and Henri Bergson as *élan vital* (an elusive vital force that acts on matter), these vitalists sought to determine that which was unquantifiable and unpredictable in matter’s movements and creations.[30] Although this is not specifically the “vitalism” to which today’s new materialisms refer, this tradition (particularly Bergson’s philosophy) remains pertinent to discussions of the *what* of matter’s being. And of course, a much more problematic history of vitalism contracts Nazi Germany’s doctrine that there were more and less “vital” forms of life (and thus, of humanity). This doctrine was used to justify the abduction, containment, and killing of those deemed “less vital,” also demonstrating biopower’s awful reach.

Remembering that univocal being denies any hierarchy or quantifiable difference between not just species, but *life* itself, Deleuze would have little to do with a vitalism that evaluated one life(force) as compared to another. However, concepts such as time-bodies, duration, and the living present, all draw out components of the Drieschian-Bergsonian project. In fact, Deleuze highlights the vitalism of his own work with his statement that “everything I’ve written is vitalistic, at least I hope it is.”[31] Some have taken this to mean that Deleuze aligns with Bergson’s *élan vital*, but I don’t agree. In the sentence prior, Deleuze writes “there’s a profound

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[29] Jane Bennett, *Vibrant Matter: A Political Ecology of Things* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2009), 63.

[30] See Hans Driesch, *The Science and Philosophy of the Organism: The Gifford Lectures Delivered before the University of Aberdeen in the Year 1907* (London: Adam and Charles Black, 1908); Bergson, *Creative Evolution*.

[31] Deleuze, *Negotiations, 1972-1990*, 1995, 143.

link between signs, life, and vitalism: the power of nonorganic life that can be found in a line that's drawn, a line of writing, a line of music. It's organisms that die, not life. Any work of art points a way through for life, finds a way through the cracks."[32] Through this we can see that Deleuze's concept of vitalism is not bound to human life, nor to biopower, for it transcends the human and non-human, organic and inorganic matter. In fact, vitalism is much more in line with his use of *affect*, as the impact of a singularity that extends well beyond itself.[33] *Affects* are instances of becoming in that they are liberated from their makers the minute they are expressed: a piece of art has uptake that entirely diverges from its intentional creation, a piece of music evokes emotion not contained in the score. Importantly, Deleuze and Guattari indicate that there is no elusive force abstracted from and/or acting on matter as a vitalist force, but rather, matter is itself affective.

Returning to vitalism as it is employed within various feminist materialisms, Jane Bennett, writing in the field of feminist new materialisms, does reference an intrinsic vitality of matter in order to contrast beliefs that matter is passive or inert.[34] Bennett recounts the findings of the National Institutes of Health's 2001 report on stem cells. The report indicates that although "most scientists now agree that *adult* stem cells exist in many tissues of the human body (*in vivo*) . . . it is less certain that embryonic stem cells exist as such in the embryo. Instead, embryonic stem cells . . . *develop in tissue culture* after they are *derived* from the inner cell mass of the early embryo."[35] What this means is that rather than following more common physiological and mechanistic understandings of the human body, whereby embryonic stem cells would originate

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[32] Deleuze, 143.
[33] Deleuze and Guattari, *What Is Philosophy?*
[34] Bennett, *Vibrant Matter*, 3.
[35] U.S. Department of Health and Health Services, as quoted in Bennett, 91.

within the embryo, there may be a vitalist process taking place outside of the assumed incubator; that is, embryonic stem cells may not actually exist *in* the body prior to their extraction. Now, to be clear, this still is not the vitalism that Bergson or Driesch spoke of. Bennet's vitalism is neither entelechy, nor an elusive acting *force,* but rather a vital materiality. And in fact, it is often the mundane, ordinary entanglements of plastic-earth-human-tech that better demonstrate the intimate relationships we have with an agential climate and so we don't need evidence of quantum stem cells in order to engage with the vitality of matter.

Drawing on Spinoza's *conatus* as the practice in which "each thing [*res*], as far as it can by its own power, strives [*conatur*] to persevere in its own being," Bennett indicates that thing-power is not held by the human body alone, but instead by *every body*: "Even a falling stone . . . 'is endeavoring, as far as in it lies, to continue in its motion.'"[36] In this way, Bennett foregrounds inanimate and nonhuman bodies (a dead rat, a bottle cap, a rock) in her work to flatten the hierarchies between animate and inanimate, human and nonhuman. She describes the thing-power of inanimate objects (or assemblages of inanimate objects) as *actant* forces, a term borrowed from Latour, which refers simply to "something that acts or to which activity is granted by others."[37] Interestingly, the actant is neither subject nor object, but rather it is an *intervener*; it is a catalyzing force that "by virtue of its particular location in an assemblage and the fortuity of being in the right place at the right time, makes the difference, makes things happen."[38] The actant is a differentiated substitute for *agent*, our familiar, and much more "subject-centred" term as Bennett's project is to make vertical hierarchies between types of

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[36] Spinoza, as quoted in Bennett, 2.
[37] Latour, as quoted in Bennett, 9.
[38] Bennett, 9.

matter horizontal. The actant, then, requires no prime mover, no human actor, and so the falling stone is affective without need for causality or reason, and likewise, the absence of causal force does nothing to hinder the impact and affectivity of its movement (whether it moves a mile from the wind of a barren desert, or a millimeter in the contraction of stone and heat into a diamond). As Bennett demonstrates, the process of experiencing the "relationship between persons and other materialities more horizontally, is to take a step toward a more ecological sensibility."[39]

Claire Colebrook also draws us in to the plane of an everyday interrelatedness by tempering the mystical, animating, spiritedness of Bennet's account of vital matter with a *passive* vitalism. The passivity of the process is akin to the second synthesis of time's memory, whereby processes of recollection, triggering, forgetfulness (remember Dory?) and embodied memory occur in every moment, without necessary agential force. As it applies to the life force of matter, a passive vitalism needs no prime mover, no teleology, and has no quantifiable measure, it just *is.* Now, even more interestingly, Colebrook pulls in a critique of "becoming" to her case for passive vitalism. She writes that the concept of becoming—as it has been enlisted within queer theory and operationalized in our philosophical texts—does little more than "repeat . . . a highly traditional and humanist sentiment of privileging act over inertia, life and creativity over death and stasis, and pure existence or coming-into-being over determination."[40] Such a critique contracts our earlier discussions of the weight and influence of the monomyth, our narratives of progress and overcoming. For Colebrook, the critique is not a rejection of the concept of becoming, but rather a moment of pause regarding its misinterpretation and misuse, for she argues that *becoming* has become the normalizing force par excellence: "It has always been the

[39] Bennett, 10.
[40] Colebrook, "Queer Aesthetics," 25.

case that anything resistant to dynamism, fruition, creation, and a flowing forth of open and productive life has been demonized as a death or inertia that tarnishes life from the outside."[41] The *vitalism* of inanimate and animate matter, then, is not about realizing and actualizing the self, the subject, the object, the idea, or about a moment whereby matter flourishes into presence.[42] Instead, becoming always bears a "capacity to annihilate itself, to refuse its *ownness,*" and passive vitalism resists a world in which "life" is determined to be a normative value.[43] This means that we must draw in inorganic matter, non-agential forces, and all that refuses conscious meaning or organization, even including capacities of death, extinction, stillness, and immobility, in the same frame as our familiar adjectives of movement, progress, and the new.

In a clear delineation between the active vitalisms that have maintained the practices of biopower and human domination of the nature, and the passive vitalisms that characterize the materialities of thick time, Colebrook describes the difference with reference to Deleuze and Guattari:

> Vitalism in its contemporary mode . . . works in two opposite directions. The tradition that Deleuze and Guattari invoke is opposed to the organism as subject or substance that would govern differential relations; their concept of "life" refers not to an ultimate principle of survival, self-maintenance and continuity but to a disrupting and destructive range of forces. The other tradition of vitalism posits "life" as a mystical and unifying principle. It is this second vitalism of meaning and the organism that . . . dominates

[41] Colebrook, 32–33.
[42] Colebrook, 31.
[43] Colebrook, 31.

> today. The turn to naturalism in philosophy, to bodies and affect in theory, to the embodied, emotional and extended mind in neuroscience: all of these maneuvers begin the study of forces from the body and its world, and all understand "life" in a traditionally vitalist sense as oriented towards survival, self-maintenance, equilibrium, homeostasis, and autopoiesis.[44]

The difference is slight, but it directs our attention to the relationality of matter (agential entanglement), over the vitality of matter (individual agency), furthermore, it reveals a familiar gender bias at work, even in our new materialist imaginings such that orientations toward survival and self-maintenance rely on the vitality of an active *man*, as compared to the passivity of *woman*, as each has been systematized. A passive vitalism pulls not only "man" from the centre of the story, but "homo sapiens" from the authorial seat. "Life itself" is not a grounding concept, nor is it our north star, but rather a univocal *materiality* that is human and non-human, organic and inorganic. A passive vitalism is still creative, unbounded, and intensive, but as anti-teleological, it distracts us from our addictions to causal hero and Columbus paradigms, or as Patrice Haynes describes it, a passive vitalism, as the lens of entangled materiality demonstrates that "life need not always live."[45]

Whether through Bennet, Colebrook, Bergson, or Deleuze, explorations of the vitality (affectivity) of matter remind us that matter has *always* been a lively condition of experience and it is *already* there in our theorizations, experiences, and theories. *Water has always been a condition of life and is already there in our racisms, sexisms, colonialisms, and nationalisms.* Through these developments, "life itself" indicates much more than a return of "real bodies" to

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[44] Claire Colebrook, *Deleuze and the Meaning of Life* (London & New York: Continuum Books, 2010), 137.

[45] Patrice Haynes, "Creative Becoming and the Patiency of Matter: Feminism, New Materialism, and Theology," *Angelaki* 19, no. 1 (2014): 137.

philosophy, or what Rose and Braidotti describe as the "politics of life itself" or the "ontology of presence after so much postmodernist deconstruction" and instead represents the onto-epistemological shift in understanding I discussed in chapter three.[46] This means that the "life" of matter includes mutual interdependencies that share reflexive relationships of force as they move, create, and influence one another. This swaps out the unknowable "real" for immanence—wild "nature" for agential realism—and consequently serves as a sensibility about the world that begins from the place of always-already being entangled in a vital materiality.

So how did we get here? How is it that we are in a *new materialist turn* that is far from *new* and still quite suspect within continental philosophy? If we trace the arguments of new materialism or the "material turn," a key argument has been that "language has been granted too much power" as Barad writes.[47] The problem of language and its maintenance of a world of ideas and representations, is not only endemic to continental philosophy and social theory, but also to feminism, as we have already seen in the way that feminist and queer theory are deeply impacted by the fear of being labeled as essentialist. If Barad's quotation serves as an eventful force of new materialism, then a condition of its possibility is also found in Judith Butler's work on gender constitution as found in *Gender Trouble* and *Bodies that Matter*.[48]

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[46] Braidotti, "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying," 202.

[47] Karen Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 28, no. 3 (2003): 801.

[48] See Barad, *Meeting the Universe Halfway*; Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter"; Butler, *Gender Trouble: Feminism and the Subversion of Identity*; Judith Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex* (New York: Routledge, 1993). For further examples of the way in which Butler's early texts have fueled arguments within feminist materialisms see Claire Colebrook, "On Not Becoming Man: The Materialist Politics of Unactualized Potential," in *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacey Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 52–84; Stacey Alaimo and Susan Hekman, "Introduction: Emerging Models of Materiality in Feminist Theory," in *Material Feminisms*, ed. Stacey Alaimo and Susan Hekman (Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2008), 1–22; Vicki Kirby, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2011).

Barad has argued that Butler's theory of performativity makes matter passive to the speech act, rather than an active force in the engendering of the gendered subject.[49] So for example, the coming out event that I discussed at length in chapter three is never only a "speech act," a verbal utterance-thus-making of a queer *self*. It is always also a series of movements, inflections, modes of dress and behavior as they both intersect with and destroy preconceived beliefs. Of course, the famous drag act of performativity draws on expressions well beyond discourse in order to demonstrate the *making* of gender within a poststructuralist milieu; we continue to miss the nuance of the material turn, however, when we imagine that a human *actor* dons an outfit and thus makes an identity, or likewise that a cultural system of meaning and classification pre-determines a nation. This is deeper than our previous discussions of the over-conscription of the subject for it reveals that we have always been wrong about subject formation and thus have always been wrong about matter. Precisely because it is so widely read, the particularly humanist bent of Butler's work restricts embodiment to an acting human subject, rather than acknowledging the "dynamic life of which that subject is an effect."[50] As it applies to *Gender Trouble* this means that despite the incredible impact of Butler's philosophy of gender performativity in terms of disconnecting sex from gender, culture from biology, what we have to do now is find the lost material body (and its clothing and piercings and cars and computers) that has been widely overwritten.

Drawing in the angle of environment, climate, and the nonhuman, as they are relevant here, Vicki Kirby poses a question to Butler in an interview: "There is a serious suggestion that 'life itself' is creative encryption. Does your understanding of language and discourse extend to

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[49] Barad, "Posthumanist Performativity: Toward an Understanding of How Matter Comes to Matter," 821, fn. 26.
[50] Colebrook, "On Not Becoming Man: The Materialist Politics of Unactualized Potential," 68.

the workings of biological codes and their apparent intelligence?"[51] Creative encryption refers to medical research that tracks the activities of bacteria as they are confronted with antibiotics. The bacteria effectively conduct code-cracking and encryption capacities which allow them to "reinvent themselves accordingly."[52] With this in mind, Kirby argues that our continued reliance on the nature/culture binary (whether we are Cartesian or poststructuralist) restricts any full account of the *nature of nature* in such an operation, that is, that nature *is* creative encryption, processes of code-cracking that intelligently and agentially reinvent themselves in every moment. Butler's response is a reminder that it will always be impossible for the human to adequately and completely capture a world "out there." She claims "I am sure that encryption can be used as a metaphor or model by which to understand biological processes, especially cell reproduction, but do we then make the move to render what is useful as an explanatory model into the ontology of biology itself?"[53] This line between metaphor and ontology, though slight, enacts a distancing from matter or the *material*, despite the fact that Butler does address such things in great detail. In fact, in *Bodies that Matter*, Butler takes up much of the criticism of *Gender Trouble*, including its disavowal of the body, as she writes that the debate between constructionism and essentialism misses the point of deconstruction, for the "point has never been that 'everything is discursively constructed.'"[54] *Bodies that Matter* also spends a great deal of time illustrating the lived entanglements of sex and exploring the deep relationship between history-formation and the materialization of the body. Butler's argument demonstrates that such grand swipes only reveal the force of exclusion and erasure as they continue to inform our

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[51] Kirby, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*, 73.
[52] Kirby, 73.
[53] Kirby, 73.
[54] Butler, *Bodies That Matter: On the Discursive Limits of Sex*, 6.

dichotomous attempts at thinking about subjectivity at all and so I draw on this delicate conversation between Kirby and Butler to illustrate the ways in which we all write, think, and act within very particular material contexts. That we would zero in on Butler's failure to provide a theory of materiality in *Gender Trouble, Bodies that Matter*, or any other text, is in fact, an entirely wrongheaded critique. It asks the wrong question to the answers that Butler has productively provided not only to queer theory, feminist theory, and community activism, but also to new feminist materialisms, as her work is the diffractive ripple (the condition of possibility) for our questions about the power of the text.

As Sara Ahmed frames this argument, she writes that Butler's "argument about materialisation supports an argument about the sedimentation of bodily norms over time. She is not offering in this book a theory of the material world, but a theory of how sex materialises or becomes worldly."[55] In this sense, Butler seems to offer us form of temporal materiality—the performative repetition-as-subject-creation that again provides a productive point of departure, rather than a frame against which we should rail. Returning to Kirby, then, we can redirect the conversation from a familiar mode of critique, to a diffractive methodology, such that she follows the ripples of our having taken the distance between nature and culture to be a given in the first place. She writes that our familiar poststructural and linguistic framings endorse the fact that "it is in the nature of Culture to unwittingly take itself for Nature."[56] We are so intent upon *not* conceiving of nature as linguistic, communicative, and reasonable that we ignore the many ways that *nature makes culture*. Consequently, Kirby's own provocative conditions of emergence include Derrida's "there is nothing outside of the text" as a starting point, rather than

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[55] Sara Ahmed, "Imaginary Prohibitions: Some Preliminary Remarks on the Founding Gestures of the 'New Materialism,'" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 15, no. 1 (2008): 33.
[56] Kirby, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*, 72.

an adversary.[57] Also, through Latour's arguments that nature is articulate, she pushes Butler, Derrida, and others to conceive of the fact that our studies of language, discourse, and text may less be about mapping an exterior "nature" and more about "investigating and witnessing an instantiation of a more general articulation and involvement whose collective expression *we are.*"[58] Kirby, therefore, proposes the line be rewritten as "there is no outside of Nature," a turn of phrase which enfolds Haraway's naturecultures in its collapse of the dualism that so often frames our contemporary imaginings.[59]

Ultimately, the material turn is not about dismissing discourse, rather it is about reconsidering the onto-epistemological boundaries that hold nature and culture, body and mind, self and other at arms-length in the first place. And so, what do we do with these naturecultures? How is the Anthropocene more than a stratigraphic layer? How are our water bodies echoes of the future? One place to start is through not thinking of the human body as a distinct, autonomous entity, and instead as "always intermeshed with the more-than-human world"; always "inseparable from 'the environment.'"[60] Our habits of viewing nature as the background to our human activities or the store of resources for human consumption all fail to comprehend a world of "fleshy beings, with [its] own needs, claims, and actions."[61] We are, therefore, pushed to comprehend not only the corporeality, that is, the *bodily natures* of plants, bodies of water, birds, and amoebas, but also the agency of these entities; they each operate in millions of seen and unseen ways. In fact, once we are attuned to it, it is easy to see, feel, and smell the ways that

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[57] Derrida, "Structure, Sign and Play in the Discourse of the Human Sciences," 158.
[58] See Latour, *Pandora's Hope*; In Kirby, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*, 83.
[59] Kirby, *Quantum Anthropologies: Life at Large*, 83.
[60] Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, 2.
[61] Alaimo, 2.

our seemingly distinct human lives are absolutely interconnected with all other *bodily natures*: for nature "is always as close as one's own skin—perhaps even closer."[62] This fact is no more visceral than when we endure smog warnings, or cut ourselves on a tiny sliver of tree-turned-paper.

It appears as though we have returned to a discussion of matter's agency, or actancy as Bennett describes it, and as discussed above, we know agency as the capacity of an *agent*—read: independent, conscious, human being—to *act* in a world. However, many in the material turn use Barad's concept of "agential realism" to describe the entanglement of meaning and mattering outside of the conscious human subject. Agential realism extends the thesis of quantum physics—that observation itself impacts the physical properties of that which is studied—to all interactions. This means that in addition to having co-creative relationships between various "quanta," or sub-atomic particles, there are also co-creative relationships between particles and thoughts, ideas and molecules. Described as quantum entanglement, Barad discusses the way that practices of knowing such as the sciences, philosophy, social sciences, or even learning shapes and colours, are "specific material engagements that participate in (re)configuring the world," and likewise that such practices of knowing would not exist without being deeply entangled within corporeal and material relationships.[63] Think back to the dusty globe on your biology teacher's desk. The fact that we have a physical entity, this spherical and contained earth, lends itself to our understanding of a world. Agential realism, then, describes a world of trees, planets, rocks, and water-bodies, that "kick back" with agential force in any relationship,

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[62] Alaimo, 2.
[63] Karen Barad, "Agential Realism: Feminist Interventions in Understanding Scientific Practices," in *The Science Studies Reader*, ed. Mario Biagioli (New York and London: Routledge, 1999), 3.

all the while refusing a teleological framework, for this agential-realism is also a passive vitalism.

Remember that passivity refers not to slowness or absence, but to an indiscriminating affectivity. It is demonstrated by the slow roll of our desert stone, just as much by the melting ice caps that kick back with floods that wipe out entire cities and sea levels that creep up to cover homes and fields. Barad also reminds us of the "climate change imaginary" which I attended to in the introduction to the chapter, a narrative that is far less a story about the past's impact on future climate, than it is an anticipatory creation of a future in peril. Through each of these scenarios, it is clear that agential realism is not a concept of autonomous agency (which depends upon a human consciousness or a sense of intentionality), but rather the activity of the *agential*, that is, a force that doesn't necessarily need a conscious mover. It is the very processes of creative encryption, as Kirby describes them. It is the biotechnologies that have shown us the vitality of embryonic stem cells, it is the colonial unfoldings of water, it is the slow movement of a desert stone. None of these processes attend to a teleological narrative, and yet, each clearly transforms and enacts the stuff of "life itself."

The process by which agential realism occurs is through *intra-action*, a concept to be distinguished from *interaction*. Whereas the latter refers to the interactions of individual agencies (still interconnected, but distinct), the former looks at the ways in which these distinct agencies are themselves formed through their engagement. "Intra-activity," then, refers to a foundational interaction between entities, whereby individual entities cannot be said to exist as things-in-themselves and instead only find meaning or expression through their connections and entanglement with other entities. This means that meaningful units of analysis are no longer "the table," "the molecule," "the human," but rather the construction (or meaning-imbuing) of the

table as a surface on which to place one's work. More importantly, this event of tablemaking is not merely a product of my placing things on the table, but instead the differentiating instant of my and the table's interaction with one another such that singularities only emerge from their intra-action. Remember the interrelated identity-formation that the table and I shared in chapter three? Intra-action is the entangled co-mingling whereby my flesh is soft as it rests on the hard table's surface, and hard as it swings through the air in a wide arc. Likewise, this very project is the product of agential realism as the words that I type are as much a product of the table on which I choose to work, the old laptop that is a bit too slow, and so delays my stream of thought and changes the narrative, and the books that surround me in stacks—books whose smells and marking I am familiar with, books that I reach for without even looking for I know the size, colour, and texture of their covers as I anticipate the words within.

Returning to the matter at hand, the material turn, along with the intra-activity of agential realism provides a method for re-imagining our environmental processes as well as contemporary climate change discourses, not only because they open us up to an entangled terrain of naturecultures, but because they reveal the agential role of the stories that we tell in making a *time* of climate. That is, in telling an origin story about climate change, solidifying its impact and its identity, and in so doing, limiting or proliferating its possibilities for past, present, and future events. Let's walk through this temporal uptake alongside the example of the jellyfish.

As a result of warming ocean temperatures and over-fishing, jellyfish have enjoyed ideal conditions for growth and reproduction. The consequence is that environmentalists and marine biologists are raising alarm bells with articles about the anticipated invasions of the "cockroaches of the sea." Stacy Alaimo takes up the discourse surrounding the jellyfish, noting that: "the jelly-fish, which seems barely to exist as a creature, not only because it is a body without organs but

because it is nearly indistinguishable from its watery world. . . . [is] nonetheless thriving, provoking fear of a clear planet in which jellies over-populate the degraded oceans, causing harm to fisheries, mining operations, ships, and desalination plants."[64] In this predictive future, jellyfish are our apocalyptic aliens, representing the roles of victim and villain. And as neoliberal platforms operate, the "kick back" of nature, or its refusal to operate according to "man-made" systems, is an important point here, for this capitalist system will undoubtedly cast the jellies as enemies, as harming not only human production, but also the ecosystem of the ocean. Such a framing legitimates forms of human intervention, control, and policing. But, what does it look like if the jellyfish is neither victim or villain and instead the protagonist in an altered tale? If we take a diffractive materialist reading of the situation, we can think of the jellies as agential phenomena. As Alaimo notes, by submersing into the world of the jellyfish, we may be able to create "complex mappings of agencies and interactions in which—for humans as well as for pelagic and benthic creatures—there is, ultimately, no firm divide between mind and matter, organism and environment, self and world."[65] Jellyfish, in fact, enact ethical and cultural scenarios that we would do well to take account of before wiping them out, just as Haraway's naturecultures create new worlds each time they are invoked in place of our familiar dualisms.

For example, in a short film that I often use in an intro queer theory class, the jellyfish is stretched around queer fluidity. Coral Short's "Genderless Jellyfish" (2014) shows images of pink, purple, and yellow jellyfish moving through the sea while the narrator gushes about this unique creature: "Oooo, so flexible, so fluid. That's because they are made of over 95% water."[66]

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[64] Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*, 283.
[65] Alaimo, 283.
[66] Coral Short, *Genderless Jellyfish* (Group Intervention Video, 2013).

Here, the jelly is the ultimate water-body as its watery subjectivity is a body-without-organs-without-bones. Short whispers, "Did you know some jellyfish have male and female organs in their body? They don't give a shit about gender. They are badass." In this story-telling-world-making, jellies are the genderpunks who've never even heard of the binary. Jellyfish also disrupt any timeline as they stretch beyond the Anthropocene, beyond the Holocene, beyond the Paleocene and the Eocene. Short continues: "floating around all happy, free-swimming marine animals. They have been around longer than dinosaurs. Five hundred million years!" Ultimately jellyfish are the eternal return par excellence as they don't die from old age, they just cycle through their lives repeatedly in an endless stream of differenciation. Short's closing, "Nothing can stop that jellyfish. Nothing," is then both an echo of the future and a contraction of the past as jellyfish occupy a much longer timeline than our short homo sapiens lifespan and will likely enjoy a much longer future. The jellyfish, with their absence of identity, fixed mass, clear lifespan, or marked gender, are clearly the greatest villain we have ever seen as they embody every vulnerability of the anthropod and so propel us toward identity-without-borders.

In discussing the material entanglements of jellyfish, Alaimo's focus is on the ethical implications of the material turn, as it has the potential to give us a different starting point for thinking about climate change. This doesn't mean simply learning how to recycle or buying electric cars, but to see that processes of worlding are *us* and our vulnerable, fleshy bodies are themselves *worlding.*[67] Jellyfish may be creatures of the sea, but their becoming-jellyfish is as natural as it is cultural as it is economic. Likewise, whether we choose MDF (medium density

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[67] I draw on Heideger's concept of "worlding" here, as a process of world-making, or becoming-world. Remember, however, that for Heidegger, worlding is always bound to Dasein, and thus restricted to man's being and thus excluding animals, minerals, plants, and materials from any worlding activities. Martin Heidegger, *Being and Time*, trans. John Macquarrie and Edward Robinson (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1927).

fiberboard) or real wood material for kitchen cabinets has an impact on our world. MDF has a shorter production time and a much lower construction cost than wood which has a long production time (we must actually grow the tree), and deforestation takes a great deal of energy and resources. However, once placed in a home, MDF has a shorter "shelf" life, it cannot be repaired and re-used as wood can, it loses its integrity quickly and cannot be recycled as it is made with heavy duty resins, formaldehydes, and waxes that don't break down (and in fact give off toxic gases in our homes). If we diffract this simple decision alongside a living, contracting, anticipating present, we may stretch the timeline of wood cabinets to a long and slow lifespan. *Sustainability* in this context references the sustainability of the cabinets themselves. MDF cabinets, on the other hand, occupy a short and compacted timeline as they are fast and cheap to produce and more quickly become refuse. That said, once disposed, wood will break down and decompose, returning back to the earth, while MDF does not break down: it *sustains* its shape and material beyond any timeline that we know. Climate change writ large is nearly impossible to understand; everything we do, say, and dream, has an impact on "climate." And so, in an effort to continue to bring the conversation *home*, that is, to the social, natural, and cultural worlds that we live in, the choices that we make, and the worlding that we do, I close this chapter with a return to the impacts of our progress and sustainability narratives, particularly as they frame our novel futures and our regrettable pasts.

REMEMBERING THE END

> There is something uncanny about the very word Anthropocene. Perhaps it is in the way it seems to arrive too early and too late.
>
> — McKenzie Wark[68]

Hollywood has always been infatuated with the idea of apocalypse. Classics such as *The War of the Worlds* (1953), *The Day the Earth Caught Fire* (1961), *The Andromeda Strain* (1971), *Dawn of the Dead* (1978), *Blade Runner* (1982), *Independence Day* (1996), or *Armageddon* (1998), show decades of fascination with all varieties of post-apocalyptic futures ranging from zombie takeovers to alien invasions, climate change to techno-dystopia. Today, movies about the end of the "world" as we know it are as plentiful as romantic comedies. Every third movie or television series projects a future of impending or present destruction and in each narrative we are telling a new story about old fears. Again, the "new" operates as a new horizon, it reaches for that which is yet unthought. For many, the new is that magical aha moment, the cut that sends us on a new path, or the scientific discovery that literally propels us into space in search of a new earth, a new planet to colonize. The thing about the *new*, however, is that it operates in the present through anticipation, as we have seen in earlier chapters. We may anticipate the outcome of a political action, anticipate a future of environmental destruction, or even imagine the day when our feminist onto-epistemologies will transform our political structures entirely, and in each of these cases, anticipation assumes direct causality between our present and our future. This means that we assume that if we carry on using the earth's resources

[68] Wark, as quoted on the back cover of Cohen, Colebrook, and Miller, *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*.

at the degree to which we are using them, the result will be continued anthropogenic degradation of the earth; jellyfish will take over our seas, plastiglomerates will take over our shorelines, and pollutants will fill our air. At the same time, our anticipation of a climate apocalypse breeds fear, paralysis, and apathy, as we anticipate a future outside of human control. At its most extreme, we are rendered "docile, most often at a wholly unconscious bodily level, through our unwitting obedience to the future," and in the everyday, we live in (and thus replicate) a world where the future is already written.[69]

As I have discussed earlier in this project, our activities of "preparing for," "speculating about," or anticipating future events effectively bring the future into the frame of the present. This means that our present becomes defined by the future, and often behaves exactly as anticipated.[70] Such a future is not concerned with distinctions of race, gender, sexuality, or ability as they play out on the bodies of subjects, for grand swipes of disaster, extinction, barrenness, and overpopulation, rely on a logic of sameness rather than any *differenciation*. This fear-laced storytelling also immobilizes us. It flattens out and solidifies any timeline as we step into concrete blocks and gaze upon the horizon with dread. Now, does this mean that we should not be alarmed about climate change? That we should deny apocalyptic threats? Of course not, the trouble is that, just as we have done in so many other timelines, we have let ourselves be lulled into a narrative of history whereby our past, present, and future are linear, and even more significantly, they are only and always read through the continuity of human experience.[71]

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[69] Winnubst, *Queering Freedom*, 128.
[70] Adams, Murphy, and Clarke, "Anticipation," 248.
[71] Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses."

So how do we break our anthropocentric timelines? The short answer is that we will never be able to think outside the "human," for we are grossly limited by our own frames. But a longer answer involves a vertical and horizontal thickening of not only our human timelines, but the entangled landscape of space-time-bodies. The conclusion to this dissertation will take up the ethical comportments (if they are to exist at all) of this thickening in greater detail, but for our purposes here, it can include, among many other options, an embrace of Harari's discussion of the fact that homo sapiens are not *the* species, but *a* species among many, many other human species, many animal species, many species of flora and fauna. This shift to species thinking takes some of our human exceptionalism away, for we are no more significant than any other species—though just as parasitic and just as prone to extinction. "Earth," actually, even more frighteningly, "life" will go on without us, as Isabelle Stengers captures in her sublime claim that:

> Of the Earth, the present subject of our scenarios, we can presuppose a single thing: it doesn't care about the questions we ask about it. What we call a catastrophe will be, for it, a contingency. Microbes will survive, as well as insects, whatever we let loose. . . From the viewpoint of the long history of the Earth itself, this will be one more "contingent event" in a long series.[72]

Rocks will not remember we were here, but they will embody human contributions by way of the Anthropocene-ic "orange rope" that snakes through stratigraphic layers the world over.[73] And of course, our anticipations of a future that lacks human narrative is only an echo of the past as

[72] Isabelle Stengers, *The Invention of Modern Science* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000), 144.
[73] Zalasiewicz et al., "Making the Case for a Formal Anthropocene Epoch."

Chakrabarty and other historians remind us of the period called "deep history," or the time period before which we have any written record.[74]

Just as the anticipation of mass extinction is awe-inspiring in all of the most terrifying ways, the allure of a deep history lies in its indefinability. We can never know all of the details about what took place, what "life" was like, what stories were told. A deep history echoes arguments that "the planet does not need to be saved; it existed before organic life, and will go on to exist for some time (probably) well after humans and well after organisms," though it feels a bit irresponsible and careless to toss our heads back with "oh the planet will survive" or "life will go on without us."[75] Either way, the threat (and memory) of extinction/absence is a compelling wake-up call for many as we anticipate homo sapiens' tumble from the top of the food chain.

Now, before we get too caught up in the end as inevitable, and the insignificance of human life, let's return to the sparkle of hope—the "promise of the new" that feminist scholars such as Grosz, Braidotti, Coole, Frost, and Alaimo dangle before us.[76] This *new* expresses the potentialities of the unknown as that which really does have the potential to transform our present lot. New feminist materialism, and actually much of feminist philosophy, has a stake in an open-ended future. Projects of revitalizing our present are critical parts of social and political change, as Grosz has argued, "unless we develop concepts of time and duration that welcome and privilege the future, that openly accept the rich virtualities and divergent resonances of the

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[74] Chakrabarty, "The Climate of History: Four Theses."

[75] Cohen, Colebrook, and Miller, *Twilight of the Anthropocene Idols*, 7.

[76] Grosz, *Becomings*; Grosz, *Time Travels*; Braidotti, "The Politics of 'Life Itself' and New Ways of Dying"; Rosi Braidotti, "The Ethics of Becoming-Imperceptible," in *Deleuze and Philosophy*, ed. Constantin V. Boundas (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2006), 133–59; Diana Coole and Samantha Frost, "Introducing the New Materialisms," in *New Materialisms: Ontology, Agency, and Politics* (Durham & London: Duke University Press, 2010), 1–46; Alaimo, *Bodily Natures: Science, Environment, and the Material Self*.

present, we will remain closed to understanding the complex processes of becoming that engender and constitute both life and matter."[77] Grosz's future relies on an infectious optimism that imagines not only *change* but renewed epistemologies as they engender new ways of thinking, being, and *doing*. Despite my hesitance around uncritical embraces of the "new," a living present does indeed indicate that the future is new. In this context, new does not mean better, but instead references a ladenness, a thickness. The new has a heaviness that is not a weight, but a force. The future of a living present, then, builds upon and changes the past in an infinite number of ways, knowing that every framing can lead to different outcomes. We cannot predict these outcomes in the present, for they are contingent on every story that we tell, move that we make, gum wrapper that we throw away.

If we think durationally we continue to question direct causality between past and present: the belief that anything that occurs "could have been foreseen by any sufficiently informed mind, and that, in the form of an idea, it was thus pre-existent to its realization."[78] This living, durational time allows us to see the perpetual activity and movement of life, movements that are not possible without the intra-active objects, voices, signs, and histories that echo around us. Is this a vibrancy of matter? Absolutely. Is it an active and determined agency? Yes, it is that as well. But is it the agency of an anthropocentric neoliberal humanism? *Not even close.* A living present denies a stable, agential, and autonomous human subject. Its proliferation of identities and movements places the emphasis not on coherence, sameness, or identity, but on *difference-in-itself*. This means that a durational temporality includes the becoming of all its participants: the becoming of the Overture as it swells to a crescendo, the becoming of the jellyfish as they

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[77] Grosz, *Becomings*, 15–16.
[78] Bergson, *The Creative Mind*, 22.

glide through the sea. None are more significant than the other, and all are involved in the making of a future-present-past.

Grosz's project of time as the engendering of the new—an echo of a differentiating interpretation—is not only intent on shifting the way we understand identity, difference, and temporality, but also, as a philosophy of immanence, it grounds itself in a complex materiality, therefore filling out those projects that may be too focused on the unknowable future. As such, we resist the neoliberal subject, or an ontology which grounds itself in human consciousness. It frees us from the dualism between interiority/exteriority—time as inside or outside of us—and instead reminds us of our time-bodies. Moving us to feel a history to which we are inexorably bound, and to listen as the sound waves carry on, the echo operates within Deleuze's temporality of difference and repetition whereby the *future* is never disconnected from the past. It is deeply bound to the heavy material memories of the physical and ideological pasts from which it came. But this doesn't mean that the future is causal or linear because unlike the unfettered, autonomous subject of neoliberalism, these "heavy material memories" hang in a thick fog around us.

In this vein, this chapter was inspired by a workshop held by Astrida Neimanis in Linköping, Sweden, where she encouraged transcorporeal engagements with the weather through a practice of "groundwriting." Groundwriting is an embodied project of rethinking the boundaries of one's body in relation to the surrounding climate or environment. By encouraging us to write "with" rather than "about" the ground, Neimanis engendered an entanglement of limbs and thoughts with weather and land in order to help us imagine (and thus create) alternate narratives of our relationships to weather changes, as well as a changing global climate. I was able to participate in the workshop at the *New Materialisms IV* Conference in Turku, Finland,

May 2013 and I remember it being a beautiful sunny day, as our little group went outside with our pens and our paper to try this "groundwriting." Our instructions included touching the ground, feeling the street, the sidewalk, imagining where the cement stopped and earth began. We were invited to smell the air. How does exhaust frame, blend, and relay the city? Listen to the sounds, is there a lone rustling tree in a cement pot? Is there laughter or anger in the honking horns? Is there a patch of grass that adds vibrant colour to an otherwise grey landscape? Just as we began, it started to rain. Big raindrops blotted my sheet of "groundwriting" as I darted for the cover of a tree and then to the overhang of a neighbouring building. Today, six years later, I can still remember the hot, tar smell of city rain, as well as the deep belly laugh we all had about the earth's sense of humour. It was a memorable event in an otherwise ordinary (and thus forgettable) conference experience which diffracted not only the plateaus of city and ground, weather and writing, but also the firm boundaries between theory and body, nature and culture, that as much as we resist, we cannot help but replicate.

There is both a slowing down and a speeding up that occurs during groundwriting as it flattens the "human," the "nature," the "culture" into a plane of univocity.[79] Just as univocity shows us that our identity politics are wrongheaded, univocity of climate shows us the horizontal heterogeny that pushes us beyond a difference *from*, and toward the multiple unfolding of different forces, moments, and relations in time. Within this plane, our familiar frames fall away, so that we may begin to recognize that Cohen's "climate change imaginary" is not a push-pull between human exceptionalism and absolute paralysis, and instead inclusive of the historical and material contingency of our neoliberal progress narratives as they anticipate a future which

[79] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 35.

requires us to *sustain* a particular present. Of course, "sustainability" is arguably one of the most loaded terms of the 21st century. To *sustain*, is to trap ourselves within an ethic of sameness, while the concept of *sustainability* calls for the thickening of our temporal horizons that a living present affords. The term is used both to inspire and to close down possible paths, and so, in line with the complicated and critical new materialisms, living presents, and vibrant materialities, we will end this chapter where we began, that is with a question about sustainability.

> sus·tain (səˈstān/)
> *verb*
> 1. strengthen or support physically or mentally. "this thought had sustained him throughout the years"
> 2. *synonyms:* comfort, help, assist, encourage, succor, support, give strength to, buoy up, carry, cheer up, hearten, endure,
>
> sus·tain·a·bil·i·ty (səˌstānəˈbilədē/)
> *noun*
> 1. the ability to be maintained at a certain rate or level. "the sustainability of economic growth"
> 2. avoidance of the depletion of natural resources in order to maintain an ecological balance. "the pursuit of global environmental sustainability"
> 3. *synonyms:* continual, viable, worthwhile, unceasing, feasible, livable[80]

As I digest an ethic of sustainability, I want to think about sustainability alongside the questions of sustainable for *whom*? Whose needs? Which future? And it may encourage us not to write *about* climate change and practices of sustainability, but to write, teach, and act *sustainably*, *climactically.* We might want to explore questions such as:

> What does it mean for the Saskatchewan Glacier to [*buoy up, endure*] a changing climate?
>
> How can we [*give strength to*] the needs of the North Saskatchewan River to flow fast

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[80] "Sustain; Sustainability," in *Oxford Dictionary Online*, accessed October 2, 2018, https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/definition/sustainability.

and furiously from the Columbia Icefield to Lake Winnipeg?

How do the prairie wheat fields of Manitoba continue to [*make viable*] their consumption by human beings?

Why do the honeybees [*unceasingly allow*] human and non-human animals to share in their resources?

These queries take seriously the phrase that "the way we live in the world is bound to what we imagine the world to be,"[81]—such that our narratives of resource management, extinction, water, flows, and glacier melt hinge upon their relationship to *us*; we are forever the sun, while nature is our planetary orbit. Sustainability is our Janus-faced launchpad, giving us arguments for capitalism and its enemies. The key to a living present as a method of understanding is that it includes a Copernican revolution so that each ecological phenomenon becomes the centre of the universe, even if only for a moment. We could imagine that honeybees have waged war on centuries of human theft or that glacier melt is their process of letting go and clearing away human refuse (including humans themselves) through the rise in sea-level, increased floods, redistribution of the toxic chemicals that were previously trapped in ice layers.

I can never access the "mind" of a glacier, for no such thing exists, nor can I embody the winged-body of a honeybee, but I can imagine environment *otherwise*, and the above questions and diffractive reframings each play a role in the anticipatory politics of climate change and thus play a role in *making* the future. Though there are differences between the anticipatory fear of the future discussed above, and the open-ended future of feminist and new materialist scholarship. I am far more interested in their diffraction patterns (their overlaps and

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[81] Jenna Tiitsman, "Planetary Subjects after the Death of Geography," in *Planetary Loves: Spivak, Postcoloniality, and Theology*, ed. Stephen D. Moore and Mayra Rivera (Fordham University Press, 2011), 150.

differenciations) than any argument about right or wrong, for each are responses to the force of neoliberal time as it has become unwieldy. It is easily able to co-opt terms such as agency, tolerance, the new, and the future as part of an ideological agenda that has much less to do with the transformative capacities of the subject, and much more to do with framing *agency* as the individual capacity to direct one's own successful, capitalist, and autonomous future. Neoliberalism's time is a time of *progress*, of individualism *par excellence,* of building from the ground up in anticipation of the successful future. And it is no secret that even our revolutionary politics ascribe to this timeline as they "revel in the idea of progress, development, movement" whether feminist, anti-racist, queer, environmentalist, or otherwise.[82] This is the narrative that a living present ruptures; this is the point in time that we can thicken and stretch, that we can propel forward, and catch the echoes of the past.

And so, we are required to travel along a thin line, a precariously strung rope bridge over a chasm of possibility. We turn the new into novel, we substitute an indiscriminate passive vitality for teleological self-actualization, and we look sideways at "progress" as though we don't really care, all the while knowing that *all we do is care about the future.* Are we endlessly naïve? Are we doomed to fail? Respectively, yes and no. The duration of the echo shows us that there can never be a "new" future, in the abstract, disconnected sense of being void of ties and conditions. Instead, each future has a duration that contracts the past resonances and virtualities from which it came, thickening the temporalities of our texts, practices, and events as they stretch toward what can still be *transformative futures*. Also, a living present is not a denial of agency, but a dislocation of the agency of the autonomous humanist subject. This is an

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[82] Grosz, *Becomings*, 17.

ontological difference ungrounded in an external measure (the measure of what counts as citizenship; what story a political movement tells). It demonstrates that to apply a humanist narrative to climate change, to weather, to jellyfish, or even evolution is to ask the wrong questions, to deny the non-linear temporality that demonstrates the force of a cultural memory, the force of a past that homo sapiens are so quick to forget. As the conclusion will demonstrate, there is no better answer to these questions, there are only opportunities to live, think, act, and love as the time-bodies that we are. That is, as entangled human/non-human becomings which recognize that "human life is now implicated in timelines and rhythms beyond that of its own borders."[83] There is no single history to uncover, no proper future we have yet to find, instead we are accountable to the millions of time-bodies with which we are always already entangled. As the living present frames climate/environment/weather/earth, we have an opportunity. We have the opportunity to imagine a world that is not in need of *sustaining* a particular present—a particular mode of development—but rather which is itself capable of enacting dynamic possibilities. And within this terrain we may just begin contract ways of being in that world that are part of a *world becoming-otherwise.*

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[83] Claire Colebrook, *Death of the PostHuman: Essays on Extinction, Vol. 1* (Ann Arbour: Open Humanities Press, 2014), 59–60.

CONCLUSION

> Thinking about time is to acknowledge two contradictory certainties: that our outward lives are governed by the seasons and the clock; that our inward lives are governed by something much less regular-an imaginative impulse cutting through the dictates of daily time, and leaving us free to ignore the boundaries of here and now and pass like lightning along the coil of pure time, that is, the circle of the universe.
>
> — Jeanette Winterson, *Sexing the Cherry*

> Queers face a strange choice: is it better to move on toward a brighter future or to hang back and cling to the past? Such divided allegiances result in contradictory feelings: pride and shame, anticipation and regret, hope and despair. Contemporary queers find ourselves in the odd situation of "looking forward" while we are "feeling backward."
>
> — Heather Love, *Feeling Backward*

The first time I read Deleuze and Guattari I was a young undergrad in Women's and Gender Studies at the University of Saskatchewan. I came to their work through Rosi Braidotti's *Metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, and like many burgeoning Deleuzians, it was the concept of *becoming* that most caught my breath. From there, the rhizome, imperceptibility, and lines of flight not only fascinated me, but resonated with my experiences of feminism and queer theory as I lived them. In fact, Deleuze and Guattari made the difference between my following a path of cultural studies and communications (often the next logical step

in the absence of many graduate programs in WGST throughout Canada) and entering the field of philosophy for graduate work. Suddenly philosophy wasn't just a game of words and arguments, it was something I could feel in my bones, something expressed in the world around me.

The first time I read Jeanette Winterson I was 19 years old, living between two cities and sexualities. When I read *Written on the Body* I didn't even notice that it was written from the perspective of a non-gendered protagonist. Once I discovered this fact, I hungrily re-read every passage, devouring the tools of narrative and description that expressed not only androgyny, but femininity, masculinity, and all multiplications thereof. Winterson's novels inspired my obsessions with temporality by opening up terrains of desire unattached to a binary, and treating the progression of time like Alice's Wonderland.

My relationships with each of these authors are easily coming-of-age narratives as I sought to find my intellectual, physical, ideological, and sexual place in the world. Deleuze was a lightning bolt, shifting my relationship to philosophy from a bystander to a full participant. Winterson's dips through time, backward and forward, her plays with memory and embrace of the physical and the sexual, expressed the thickness of the living present that birthed me into adulthood. For the first time, after years of reading Aristotle, Mill, Wollstonecraft, Marx, Foucault, and even Butler, Deleuze's texts resonated with me on a personal level and Winterson gave me a language of desire that was otherwise hidden. As I traveled from undergraduate to graduate school, I often had texts from both writers open on my desk, diffracting philosophy and literature through, over, and under one another.

Now, this may seem overly sentimental, but we are all connected to the arguments that we make. Even if we are assigned an essay for a class that makes us seethe, it is our anger that

fuels the passion (or lack thereof) with which we take up arms. More often our motivations are even closer than this: a scholar of Beauvoir can recall a moment when *The Second Sex* flipped the table on their understanding of gender; a scholar of Kant may recall standing at the edge of the Grand Canyon and finally understanding the sublime; a reader of Foucault can recall millions of moments of staring in the mirror with judgment when they studied the panopticon. As we write, teach, and speak, we are always already entangled in the narratives of our lives, and it is precisely these entangled and diffractive moments that capture our imaginations, drive us to one text over another, and which reveal the inextricability of memory, experience, ideas, and storytelling as they inform our choices and actions. Each of our entangled time-bodies are the rhizomatic fields through which the future (present and past) is made and it is our stories that do the work of creation.

The diffractive timescapes of some of the previous chapters—a deep dive into the climate change imaginary and its anticipatory grip on the present, the two-sided coin of sameness and difference as it multiplies gender, sex, and desire, and even a thickened telling of the story of misogyny via public politics in various spheres—each represent different ways of narrating familiar topics within feminist, philosophical, and queer terrains and in so doing, they open up alternative lines of flight (remembering that lines of flight are connecting points between assemblages or relational subjects). However, my intention is never merely to "show and tell," for this is a project biased toward action, recognizing that storytelling has always been an agential force. Whether through our methods of telling, of inclusion and exclusion, the cuts that we make, the lines that we draw, each of these has an impact on and participates in processes of world-making. As a result, I have endeavored to break myself from the habit of writing "we can think differently," or even "we can open alternatives" as I have just written above. Instead I want

to change the narrative to "we can *do* differently and this is how we might try." The living present as a method of understanding (and telling) is also an agential force. It changes the way that I talk and write; it has impacted my methods of planning and thinking. For example, when I began working at OUTSaskatoon there were large portraits on the walls of the centre: white men who had waged hero's journeys and who had fought their way through discrimination and horror to pave a new and liberatory path for the rest of us. Over time I moved these images from their prominent spots and downsized them to postcard sizes. My intention was never to minimize, only to shift their scale and impact so that they were some *among* many, rather than one *above* others. We still display these images and pay homage to our pasts, but alongside them we showcase art by local Two Spirit and queer artists and photographs that foreground community leaders of all backgrounds. We have also incorporated stories of the women and trans people into our histories and this has had an effect on how we talk about the pasts of Saskatoon's queer, trans, and Two Spirit community and consequently on our *making* of the future. As this example demonstrates, each case of doing and telling differently actually has material and community-based effects on our imagined futures and our expanding pasts.

In order to continue to tell stories that are rhizomes rather than trees, stories that create rather than solidify, my concluding comments take up one final question, a question that has, in fact, already guided every chapter up to this point: *What is the use of a living present for social and cultural change?* This is the "so what?" This is the question about how our learnings from this project can guide us toward imagining (and bringing about) more equitable communities, needed social programs, balanced ecosystems, and places of belonging. This is a question about how we live and live *with*, how we remember and forget, how we dream and realize and it is also a question about *ethics.* Although my aim has not explicitly been to develop an ethics within this

work, the living present offers immense ethical uptake. Particularly, as *time-bodies*, we are accountable to our temporal threads. Whether through our storytelling, our purchases, our footsteps, the memories that haunt our present choices, or the force of our own expectations and anticipations of the future on present actions, we are time-makers in every word, act, and deed. This thick temporal accountability is what I mean by *the matter of time*, and it is precisely this enactment that opens us up to the ethical. That said, I am not referring to a normative or prescriptive ethics. Instead it is an ethics that is most aptly described as the always already; we are always already in the thick of the ethical, and social and cultural change is produced through admitting to our own entanglements. Now, before we dive too deep into this matter, any conversation about the ethical import of the living present must be tempered by the fact that Deleuze and Guattari are not generally heralded for their ethical contributions. In fact, they have been said to go against any sort of ethics entirely. Of course, such a charge depends on what we call *ethics* in the first place, but that is a question for another paper. For our purposes here, we will now turn to the dialogue around whether or not there can be a Deleuzian ethic in more detail.

An Ungrounded Ethics

In the introduction to the lone collection of articles tending to whether a Deleuzian ethic is possible, Nathan Jun writes:

> Ten years into the Deleuzian century . . . few would disagree that the world as we know it is sinking into an economic, political, social, and ethical abyss of previously unimaginable depths. Back in the halcyon days when that world was still in its infancy, Deleuze was widely heralded as a visionary who would help us demystify the web of

> global technological and financial networks which was, at that time, just starting to be spun. Since then, the prophecies have largely come to pass; everyone from Žižek to Badiou is fond of saying that the conceptual and methodological tools with which we make sense of this age are Deleuzian tools.[1]

Furthermore, in the preface to Deleuze and Guattari's *Anti-Oedipus,* Foucault famously writes "I would say that Anti-Oedipus (*may its authors forgive me*) is a book of ethics, the first book of ethics to be written in France in quite a long time."[2] Together, these claims serve as points of departure, whereby the impetus toward a "Deleuzian age" and Foucault's grand (though cheeky) claims on the ethical import of *Anti-Oedipus* set us out on a new path of inquiry as to the impacts of Deleuze and Guattari's work. That said, shortly after his proud claim, Jun clarifies that Deleuze's "tools" are not of the moral character as he has "long been and continues to be viewed chiefly as a metaphysician and a historian of philosophy" rather than an ethical philosopher[3]—and Foucault's tone in the preface to *Anti-Oedipus* seems to characterize Deleuze and Guattari's ethical uptake as though it is an ill-fitting suit. Some have even argued that, rather than serving as the visionary in a web of global chaos, that Deleuze (and Guattari) are actually complicit within the system of capitalism that propels this web.

Before belaboring one such claim—less in a spirit of charity and more in the spirit of curiosity—it bears mentioning that the problem at hand is not whether Deleuze and Guattari can lend a hand to any ethical matters, but rather that they have been caught between ethics and morality. Whereas morality refers to a set of rules, guidelines, or principles against which to

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[1] Nathan Jun, "Introduction," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Nathan Jun and Daniel W. Smith (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 1.
[2] Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari, *Anti-Oedipus*, trans. Robert Hurley, Mark Seem, and Helen R. Lane (New York: Viking, 1977), xv, emphasis added.
[3] Jun, "Introduction," 1.

measure one's actions (a chart of right and wrong), ethics are often more linked to the bigger questions of how to live in community or what constitutes a "good" life. To say that Deleuze and Guattari offer any sort of morality, is generally wrongheaded, but in terms of an ethic or an ethos it is through drawing on Spinoza that one such possibility comes into focus as a multiplication of connections and relations between bodies. According to Deleuze, one of Spinoza's greatest imports to a question of ethics is his use of the "body as a model" whereby "the body surpasses the knowledge that we have of it, *and that thought likewise surpasses the consciousness that we have of it*," and so it is in the unknown powers of the body and *what it can do* that we find the greatest potential for ethics.[4]

Echoing the concept of assemblage, Deleuze's Spinoza moves away from an ethics dependent on individual bodies, and even consciousness, but rather relies on the relationships, connections, and encounters between bodies, as these encounters create and decompose one another. For Spinoza, these connections are preferably positive and joyful affections as opposed to sad ones, but as Elena del Rio discusses in *The Grace of Destruction,* such a distinction is not an evaluation of the quality of the connection, but rather indication of the "capacities our bodies have to affect or to be affected by other bodies."[5] And so for Spinoza (and Deleuze), problems occur when we limit what a body can do, and more importantly, what it can do in the world. As one example of the value of a Spinozan-Deleuzian ethic at work, del Rio applies this frame to extreme cinema, such that it provides fertile ground for bodies (ideas, images, affects) to generate new forms of life: "extreme cinemas are involved in recycling and reanimating various symptoms, movements, comportments, and behaviors that become generative of new affects

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[4] Gilles Deleuze, *Spinoza: Practical Philosophy*, trans. Robert Hurley (San Francisco: City Lights Books, 1988), 18.
[5] Elena del Rio, *The Grace of Destruction: A Vital Ethology of Extreme Cinemas* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2016), 20.

through compositions, decompositions, and recompositions."[6] As we will see below, the open-ended, generative, and non-hierarchal function of a Deleuzian ethic is precisely the tool by which to engage multiple platforms of expression, whether film, literature, or physical interaction.

In one such application, Boltanski and Chiapello argue that Deleuze's philosophy has potentially "opened up an opportunity for capitalism to base itself on new forms of control and commodify new, more individuated and 'authentic' goods."[7] It is precisely through processes such as "mobility, fluidity" and the movements of "nomads" that a contemporary capitalism has gained ground as it enables workplace rhetoric around the need for employees to be flexible, change-oriented, and able to navigate multiple projects at once all in service to greater reach, the ability to adeptly respond to the desires of every consumer (and to push more product), and thus more control of the market.[8] Clearly Deleuze's work can, and has supported capitalist, sexist, and even fascist arguments. The Deleuzian "tools" of the nomad, lines of flight, concepts, the assemblage, and the rhizome are often more relevant to analyses of social media than they are to questions of *how to live.* Importantly, however, the knitting together of these various threads occurs not necessarily in accordance with some sort of original intent (on the parts of Deleuze and Guattari) but rather because our words, thoughts, and deeds have uptake well beyond us. This is the work of the "concept" that Deleuze and Guattari showcase in *What is Philosophy?* and which I describe in chapter one. Concepts have *affects,* that is, impacts that extend beyond the intentions or words themselves. Think about shouting the word "bomb" in a shopping centre, or even about the word "gender," which means so many different things to so many different

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[6] del Rio, 23.
[7] Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism* (New York: Verso, 2007), 467.
[8] Boltanski and Chiapello, 147.

people. Even *becoming* has wide uptake as it links with change, fluidity, transformation, and overcoming. The point at which Deleuze's becoming becomes complicit within capitalism is the moment when we hold too tightly to the outcome, thus participating in a monomythic grip on our stories, problems and creations. The point at which a Deleuzian ethic becomes a joke is when we assume a clear and methodical path from point A to point B. And ultimately, it is precisely *because* Deleuze bravely engages with all types of systems that we are provided with such exacting and far reaching tools. Just as we faced human extinction head on in chapter four, extracting it from a value- or even fear-based framework, we could do so with capitalism, neoliberalism, globalization, homophobia, or sexism [?]. It is tempting to turn these concepts into our enemies and thus to turn away from any instance where they are given air when, in fact, it is the turning away that billows their sails in the first place and the more air we give to something like sexism, the deeper it can breathe and grow, the stronger its course becomes, the greater its winds. In this way, it is never the concept which is in and of itself *bad*—we are neck deep in a philosophy of immanence after all—it is always and only a matter of how it is used, the power both taken up and given, its lines of flight. To speak of the ethical at all, within this context, is to let everything in, to start from wide open space and to acknowledge that sexism, capitalism, transphobia, and violence are as much contributors to any so-termed "ethical response" as hope, love, compassion, and care.

As Jun winds his way through these various points of ethical uptake and departure within Deleuze's work, his landing point is to show that "they—*we*—play a role in the generation, operation, and transformation of other assemblages, other machines."[9] The ethical task, then, is

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[9] Jun, "Introduction," 3.

not to try to understand things as they are, but rather to imagine them as they might be. So, if we take sexism as a point of departure, rather than defining it as it *is*—prejudice and/or discrimination based on a person's sex or gender—we may talk about sexism as an *absence.* We may tell a story about a future where sex-based prejudice does not exist, we might imagine a University built entirely with non-gendered bathrooms, we might picture a parliamentary session that not only has as many women as men present, but which also reflects diversity in colour, sexuality, age, and ability. This point of departure is precisely the condition of possibility for "thinking, doing, and being otherwise" as Jun reminds us.[10] So now, as we return to the enigmatic and ephemeral *being otherwise*, we can start to see that the "otherwise" is much more than a vague gesture or a hand-waving exercise. Instead, "thinking, doing, and being otherwise" indicates an ethical leap that is as simple as changing our narratives from teleological to open-ended tales and as difficult as rewiring ourselves to approach systems without naming them, to see people without fixating on categories, and to read histories without affirming a causal tale. The otherwise is an opening that is not proscriptive, it is a quick side-step without normative weight and these movements have immense material impact as they breathe air into novel processes and possibilities. Ultimately, with its refusal to name a *something* or an *actual*, the "otherwise" resists a clear landing spot, it keeps us light on our feet and open to change.

The key is that Deleuze refuses any framework which give us a ground to stand on or which resembles moral certainty by way of a map as to how to *live* (cue becoming over being), and so the greatest import of the living present is its denial of any normative principles as to what we might *do* or how we might *act*. It is this nuance that Foucault's cheeky "may its authors

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[10] Jun, 3.

forgive me" references, as he acknowledges Deleuze and Guattari's distance from any normative ethic, instead the matter at hand is an ethics without *ethics* and every attempt to describe and define participates in its erasure. Consequently, the difficulty in talking about the political and social impetus of an anti-normative apparatus is that we really are walking a tightrope (many tightropes) between accountability and absolute freedom, between deep interrelatedness and wide-open possibilities.

Levi Bryant walks this tightrope between accountability and absolute freedom by focusing in on the concept of the event, not unlike I have done in chapter three through my discussion of the coming out event as a moment of subject formation. Remember that I discussed the way that unlike a narrative which captures one event as "the" event or the moment of transformation, the coming out event is multiple. It is an event among others and an event that is entangled with one's audience, the time of day, the television show playing in the background, the colour of one's hair. Likewise, Bryant disagrees with the "ethical fetishism" of Immanuel Kant, John Stuart Mill, or Christine Korsgaard, which situates the human at the centre of morality, and instead argues that ethics (through the event) are relational: "given the manner in which humans always employ other objects and are employed by other objects in their actions, the idea of humans acting *alone* and without the intermediary of other objects at work in their action is itself a fiction."[11]

Bryant references the production of wine to illustrate this interrelatedness and I have expanded on his example here, *because of my love for wine*. Imagine we watch a grape seed grow in its environment. Alongside the grape growers and wine makers, a grape seed is up

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[11] Levi R. Bryant, "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics without Αρχή," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 28.

against neighbouring plants, rain and sun levels, insects and birds, and a distinct topography made up of minerals (or lacking minerals) and other materials. If the seed develops into a grapevine it continues to be entangled in various relationships to earth and air, biological divergence (will the cells divide? Will leaves grow on the first branch or the twentieth?), and then the winemaker oversees the maceration processes, the addition of other wine varietals, the timing for skin contact, and the addition of yeast according to ratios that have been tweaked and tested for years. After they have aged (or not), laid to rest in oak (or metal) barrels, been bottled quickly (or slowly), and set aside to rest (or shipped young), bottles are sent around the world, to different climates and pressures, and paired with different foods and smells upon opening. The result is an infinite number of outcomes. Every batch (and even bottle) is unique from those that came before or after and this uniqueness is the result of human choices, the age of the oak barrels, temperature and environment, time and delay. When the glass of wine lands on my table, its aroma and taste are the furthest thing from a causal tale for the process is so much more than the simple determination that its mineral flavours came from soil rich in limestone, its long finish is the result of lengthy skin contact. Wine-making is intra-active and inventive; it is the convergence of particulars within a collective which is novel at the same time that it is inextricably bound to its conditions of emergence.

Whether the *event* is the growth of the grapevine, the addition of chemicals, or the shipping truck whose air conditioning breaks down enroute to its destination, it is always a point of departure; the event is a singularity within millions of potentialities. And alongside Bryant, I circle back to the event because if there is to be a Deleuzian ethics at all, it is something which erupts from the event. The event is “something excessive in relation to its actualization, something that overthrows worlds, individuals, and persons, and leaves them to the depth of the

ground which works and dissolves them."[12] This means that the event is the moment of diffraction, the convergence of overlapping time-bodies and generative leaps, without any predetermined path. The *ethical*, then, is also inventive, but it is not a rupture in the same way that the event is. Rather than the point of departure, the ethical is the *relationship* between and through all inputting parties; the ethical is the ultimate contraction of all pasts and all futures that occurs within each and every event. Some have called this Deleuzian ethic an ethology or an ethos and others have called it an immanent ethics, but in each case, the *ethical* is an open-ended expansion of possibilities, where more possibilities are not necessarily *better* or more *valuable,* they are simply *possible* rather than not.[13] As well, like the event, the ethical is never that which we determine after the fact, nor that which we apply to a problem, but instead it lives within the problem; an immanent ethic (ethology, ethos) calls for the transformation of its subject (or collection of subjects) instantaneously with its invocation.[14]

Now, although I agree with and echo the various projects intent upon teasing out the ethical within Deleuze and Guattari's work, there is still something missing, for how is it that we know that change happens? What ties one action to the next if cause and effect is only retroactive? How is it that an infinitely multiple subject can recognize herself in the mirror over a twenty-year span? Just as the event is inexplicably temporal, ethics too are only and ever about *time*. As time-bodies we are contractions of every past and anticipations of every future, and yet

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[12] Deleuze, *The Logic of Sense*, 167–68.
[13] Anthony Uhlmann, "Deleuze, Ethics, Ethology, and Art," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 154–70; Erinn Cunniff Gilson, "Responsive Becoming: Ethics between Deleuze and Feminism," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 89–107; John Lundy, "The Stroll: Reflections on Deleuzian Ethics," *Rhizomes: Cultural Studies in Emerging Knowledge*, no. 26 (2014); Daniel W. Smith, "Deleuze and the Question of Desire: Towards and Immanent Theory of Ethics," in *Deleuze and Ethics*, ed. Daniel W. Smith and Nathan Jun (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2011), 123–41; Kathrin Thiele, "Of Immanence and Becoming: Deleuze and Guattari's Philosophy and/as Relational Ontology," *Deleuze Studies* 10, no. 1 (2016): 117–34.
[14] Bryant, "The Ethics of the Event: Deleuze and Ethics without Αρχή," 36.

we live in a thick and entangled present. We make time, but we do not control time; we change pasts and futures but this change is never ours alone. We are not autonomous and we are not even in control of our own unique heroic journeys. We are bound to our entanglements, be they partners, cities, choices, insects, just as they are bound to us and this binding occurs in and through something much more subtle than intra-activity, diffraction, or any sort of additive concept. This binding occurs through being itself, where being is univocity and differenciation, a seamless flip between difference and sameness. That we all *are* in the same way and that such being is a thick contraction of the past (all pasts) and the anticipation of the future (all futures) is precisely the *time* and therefore the *relationality* of the ethical and thus serves as the condition of possibility for social and cultural change.

To illustrate this, I am going to reference one final example or "timescape." Epigenetics allows for the study of gene expression governed by the genome: the cellular material on top of DNA and the science of epigenetics is a key example of the entanglement of nature and culture. While the epigenome does not change one's genetic code, it can activate or silence genes by mobilizing molecules called methyl groups (DNA methylation) which means that the cellular material on top of DNA can be changed and impacted by environmental and social factors. Now, scientists have long demonstrated that poor environmental conditions such as toxins, contaminants, dietary changes, deficient pre-natal nutrition, and exposure to stressors have an impact on the body, and even that they can activate or silence genes.[15] But it is less well known that these environmentally-induced changes in gene expression can also be passed down to

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[15] Lawrence V. Harper, "Epigenetic Inheritance and the Intergenerational Transfer of Experience," *Psychological Bulletin* 131, no. 3 (2005): 340–60; Christopher W. Kuzawa and Elizabeth Sweet, "Epigenetics and the Embodiment of Race: Developmental Origins of US Racial Disparities in Cardiovascular Health," *American Journal of Human Biology: The Official Journal of the Human Biology Council* 21, no. 1 (2009): 2–15; Sarah C. P. Williams, "Epigenetics," *Proceedings of the National Academy of Sciences* 110, no. 9 (2013): 3209.

offspring through at least one generation through a form of epigenetic inheritance. This means an individual's experience of abuse, famine, or other significant cultural and physical traumas "might influence the phenotypes of [their] offspring," or put another way, the diets, exposure to toxins, and even the emotional stresses that our parents and grandparents experienced, can predispose us to health-risks, diseases, and changes to our lifespans.[16] For example, Kuzawa and Sweet demonstrate that there is a relationship between pregnant African-American women's experiences of racism, discrimination, and structural inequity and increased incidences of cardiovascular disease (among other things) in their children.[17]

The epigenetic *event* has ruptured much more than the health field as scholars such as Noela Davis use epigenetics within a feminist landscape to fortify arguments that our bodies are rich compositories of past experiences and that these experiences serve as much more than haunting memories, but rather play out through patterns of illness and social behaviours.[18] Likewise, Megan Warin & Anne Hammarström bring feminist materialisms to bear on epigenetic research in an effort to stretch epigenetic research beyond its common focus on the maternal and pregnant body as a conduit of epigenetic inheritance. Some of Warin and Hammarström's strategies include recognizing that the research process itself (including the questions, hypotheses, and measurement tools) are co-determinant as the diffraction grating has

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[16] Harper, "Epigenetic Inheritance and the Intergenerational Transfer of Experience," 341.

[17] Kuzawa and Sweet, "Epigenetics and the Embodiment of Race."

[18] Noela Davis, "The Sociality of Biology: Epigenetics and the Molecularisation of the Social" (Mattering: Feminism, Science, and Materialism, City University of New York, 2013) Note as well that epigenetics are not always used to support arguments that we would call transformative or open-ended, in fact, the knowledge that our social environments can have impacts on biology for generations to come has been used to bolster narratives that put the blame on individuals (especially pregnant women); See Mark A. Rothstein, Yu Cai, and Gary E. Marchant, "The Ghost in Our Genes: Legal and Ethical Implications of Epigenetics," *Health Matrix Clevel.* 19, no. 1 (2009): 1–62.

already shown us.[19] This demonstrates that our questions or lenses are as much a part of the answer as the object of study.

Although there are still many complications within the field, epigenetic inheritance reveals the contracted pasts of disease, pasts of abundance, pasts of pain and hurt, and manifest these pasts within the socio-genetic material of the human body, expressing these entanglements in bodies, cultures, and medical institutions to come. Epigenetics are particularly salient to conversations about the social, cultural, and historical effects of residential schools and continued neocolonial/liberal policies that limit the self-determination and lives of Indigenous peoples. Through epigenetics we can dig deeper, we can thicken the story to see that such discussions fail to fully understand the interconnectedness or the intersectionality of environmental and biological matters, or the way that genetics and environments "essentially coact to lead to the development of the individual" and can be transmitted across generations. [20] When we apply epigenetic inheritance to the impact of one person's residential school experience on subsequent generations, it reveals that the operations of sustained trauma, stigma, and illness can reshape specific genetic traits within a particular community, over a relatively short period of time. Thus, epigenetics brings the inter and transgenerational impact of residential schools into sharp focus. The children and grandchildren of those who endured residential schools are not only empathetic to the experiences of previous generations, but can feel their experiences in their bones; they retell the stories of their ancestors through their bodies, their emotional and intellectual lives. Such realizations contract previous discussions within this

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[19] Megan Warin and Anne Hammarström, "Material Feminism and Epigenetics: A 'Critical Window' for Engagement?," *Australian Feminist Studies* (2018): 11.
[20] Lawrence Harper, "Epigenetic Inheritance and the Intergenerational Transfer of Experience," *Psychological Bulletin*, no. 131 (2005): 340-1.

work, such as the absence of potable water in White Bear First Nation. How does this story change when we ask how structural racism and water shortages/absences co-act to materialize in the bodies of generations of White Bear residents to come? We can also ask questions about what epigenetic inheritance might look like in relation to the AIDS crisis? To survivors of Nazi internment camps? Each of these ruptures are dripping with echoes of our future politics, mental health patterns, embedded molecules of PTSD, and as well, they compel us to ask how we can ever justify harm against another (human, animal, plant, shoreline) when the impact contracts so many future generations in, as of yet, unimaginable ways? The ethical is about all our relations, a Lakota phrase that means that we are all connected—human beings, animals, rocks, air—for generations forward and generations back.

IT'S ABOUT TIME

Returning to our questions about social and political change, it is clear that epigenetic inheritance has ethical import as it stretches our timelines far into the future and far into the past. At the same time, throughout this dissertation, I hope it is becoming clear that we have already travelled decidedly ethical terrains. In the introduction, my adult self is layered with a complicated memory of a mental health hospital. The tricks of time that I experienced as a child, rather than indicating failures of memory, are precisely the Deleuzian problem, whereby a problem is not something that is in my *mind*, but something that belongs to the world.[21] This point of departure, then, thickens my understanding and experience with mental health. I stretch this understanding forward and backward through reading books and working within the human

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[21] Deleuze, *Difference and Repetition*, 280.

service sector and I know that it is not that my entry into this work was determined by the childhood experience (though it makes a great story to tell it this way) but rather that there are millions of possibilities and actualization from that childhood experience and this is but one.

And what about chapter four's echoes of the future? This chapter provides likely the most ethically normative call to action as climate change rears its terrifying head, but the important piece is not to think about it as reacting, but to see that we have already acted. We made this world as much as it has made us. Whether through the rings of a tree trunk, the biodegradability of kitchen cabinets, or plastiglomerates of the Hawaiian shoreline, *matter* serves as a memory of the past and if we are to see the driving force of a living present as a "so what?" we need to remember that it is not simply that memory has material incarnations, but rather that past, present, and future are co-created by the *matter of time*. Both the materiality of change and process, and the temporality of objects, people, rocks, and animals are part of this co-creation. The growth of a sunflower *is* the passing of time, an old and worn agenda *is* a contraction of a year alongside a new leather-bound counterpart which anticipates a fresh-faced future, and thus to have an ethics (of climate change, of extinction, of the Anthropocene) at all is simply to be the thick, entangled time-bodies that we already are.

Our exploration of the time of misogyny in chapter two echoes the epigraph to this chapter where Jeanette Winterson reminds us of the vast differences between time (or concepts, in this matter) as a legislating societal force and time as it is experienced as an event of possibility. Though the time of misogyny has been dire, and at times even a bit dusty, we always have the opportunity to breathe new life into old concepts, and thus to see what they can *do* in terms of amplifying harms and drawing in collective projects of response. Furthermore, it is the lived sensation of the word itself that is part and parcel of its future.

In chapter three I travelled various webs of queer time, as those sites of possibility where the linearity of the monomyth has not entirely taken hold. I spent some time on the coming out event, which accomplishes both a fixing and an undoing of identity. Instead of trying to resolve this divergence, I situate coming out within an agential timescape embedded in cultural-historical as well as emotional and material queer archives. By adding a thick materiality to the otherwise fluid and ever-changing queer subject we can see the true uptake of queer temporality as not only a multiplicity of non-linear timelines, but as an embodied process of subject formation. Described as a time-body, the subject is always a double-sided coin of univocity and differenciation, sameness and difference.

And finally, we turn to chapter one: "The Living Present." As we worked our way through the living present alongside Jeanette Winterson's *The Stone Gods* we were given the greatest access to its ethical force. I simplified three contractions of time (the living present, the pure past, and the eternal return) into one, but in so doing, I aimed to demonstrate that relying on three distinct processes ends up being more limiting than engaging with only one immanent and univocal apparatus of understanding. The living present shows us that the *now*, the present, is always our access point, but that this *now* is also an already and a not yet. Ultimately, and as I hope I have shown, it is not just recycling that teaches us about the temporality of the material, it is bodies, racisms, transphobias, institutions, and transgenerational bodies that show us how material our experiences and lives really are. The experience of living under colonialism has long lasting biological effects at a molecular level, which persist across generations; the expanding population of jellyfish contracts thousands of years of changing ocean temperatures, and anticipates a dangerous future. The implications of the living present are vast and engender a long temporal frame, while at the same time demonstrating how insufficient our short time

frames are for any level of understanding. It also demonstrates that it is because we are relational time-bodies that we can have accountability or any degree of responsibility at all.

Throughout this work, I have endeavored to show that when we really take heed of the fact that we live, act, and are acted upon within a living present which is always contracting the past as it reaches toward an unknowable future, we unsettle the fierce linearity of our stories about history, about tomorrow, about today. As we "thicken" the present moment to include embedded pasts (and embodied futures) we are better poised to take accountability for our position(s) in the making of the timeline and thus the creation of our social and cultural environments. Through the living present, we are called to tend to our temporal threads, including their impacts on our political movements, our philosophical theories, our relationships with the earth, our partners, our children. These are the stories from the living present; these are the *doings* and *becomings* of time.

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