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Making Intergenerational Otherwise: Kids Enacting Decolonial, Queer, Crip Futures

by May Chazan and Megan Hill

Abstract: In this paper, we reflect upon the lessons learned in an intergenerational arts-based research workshop held in 2023 on Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe territory. The workshop brought together activists ages ten to one hundred, meaningfully including children and older adults as equal participants. Bridging writing on queer, crip, decolonial futures with scholarship on critical aging studies and childhood studies, we argue that radical intergenerationality is central to reworlding, or to imagining and making livable, liberatory futures. Centered around three vignettes from the workshop, this article explores how the presence of children and their intergenerational interactions offered teachings about accountability, joy, and honouring diverse body-minds. We conclude that, in a process of radical imagination, the youth offered us a glimpse of the intergenerational, decolonial, queer, crip futures we dream of and helped to create them in the space we shared.

Keywords: queer futures; crip futures; aging futures; decolonization; intergenerationality; child studies; aging studies; futurity

Résumé : Dans cet article, nous réfléchissons aux enseignements tirés d'un atelier de recherche artistique intergénérationnel organisé en 2023, sur les terres des Michi Saagiig (Anishinaabeg de Mississauga). L'atelier rassemblait des activistes âgés de 10 à 100 ans, intégrant concrètement la participation équitable d'enfants et de personnes plus âgées. En rapprochant les écrits relatifs à l'avenir décolonisé, queer, et crip avec l'érudition des études primordiales portant sur le vieillissement et l'enfance, nous soutenons que l'intergénérationnalité radicale est indispensable pour reconstruire le monde ou pour s'imaginer et concrétiser un avenir viable et libératoire. Centré sur trois vignettes abordées dans l'atelier, cet article explore la façon dont la présence d'enfants et leurs interactions intergénérationnelles ont proposé des enseignements relatifs à la responsabilisation ainsi qu'à la joie et rendent hommage à la diversité de corps-esprit. Nous concluons que, dans un processus d'imagination radicale, les jeunes nous ont fourni un aperçu de l'avenir intergénérationnel, décolonisé, queer, et crip dont nous rêvons et nous ont aidés à le concrétiser dans l'espace que nous avons partagé.

Mots clés : avenir pour les personnes âgées; avenir pour les personnes queers; avenir pour les personnes crip; décolonisation; intergénérationnalité; études de l'enfant; études de la personne âgée; futurité

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Introduction

In the spring of 2023, Aging Activisms hosted our first in-person research gathering since 2019, after four years of disruption and trauma (see Chazan 2023). The energy in the room was a familiar mix of anxiety and excitement, punctuated by the grief and awkwardness of re-learning how to connect in pandemic times. The room also buzzed with youthful energy as we had invited children to take part for the first time. Members of the local Youth Climate Action Club (YCAC), aged ten to fifteen, took part in this two-day intergenerational research workshop at Sadleir House, a student and community centre located in Peterborough, Canada, on Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe territory.

Aging Activisms (www.agingactivisms.org) is a program of community-based research and an activist-research collective comprised of a diverse intergenerational community of activists, artists, and organizers. Our research includes imagining our collective futures into being through storytelling, art-making, and relationship building. We seek to unsettle dominant colonial, capitalist, ableist, and heteronormative narratives of futurity and aging by centering those stories most often marginal within dominant cultural imaginaries of futures, aging, and social change (Chazan and Whetung 2022; Chazan and Baldwin 2021a; Chazan 2019). We have recorded a collection of "lesser-told" activist stories in our community (https://digitalcollections.trentu.ca/collections/stories-resistance-resurgence-and-resilience-nogojiwanong-peterborough) and curated an interactive public installation of our visions for livable and just futures on Michi Saagig territory (https://www.agingactivisms.org/about-3). Curious how the presence of children might grow our work, we titled our 2023 workshop "Youth Stories of Reworlding." We sought meaningful intergenerational exchange through drama, collage, and creative writing exercises that explored the central questions of this project: (1) What do you imagine the most beautiful and socially just future could look or feel like? (2) What would make this community a good place to grow old(er)? (3) How do we get to the futures we want?

Dr. May Chazan, co-author on this paper, leads Aging Activisms alongside a dedicated team of academic and community organizers, including co-author Megan Hill. Aging Activisms is based at Trent University and funded by the Canada Research Chairs program (2013-2024). May is a cisgender, queer activist, community organizer, and white settler of Jewish ancestry, in her late forties at the time of writing, and parent to two amazing queer kids. At the time of the research, Megan was a graduate student at Trent, supervised by May; she is a queer, white settler, disabled community organizer, and academic in her mid twenties.

Conceptual Framework

Conceptually, this paper seeks to extend academic-activist writing on the theme of reworlding, or what it means to make liberatory futures in the present-moment through grounded, relational, creative praxis (Carter, Recollet, and Robinson 2017). We build on the writing of scholars working towards desired futures in queer studies (see: Edelman 2004; Muñoz 2009), Indigenous and decolonial scholarship (see: Maynard and Betasamosake Simpson 2022; Ansloos et al. 2021) and disability/crip studies (see: Kafer 2013; Piepzna-Samarasinha 2022), specifically the ways in which they imagine futures beyond, resistant to, and outside of dominant power systems with their compulsory heteronormativity, colonial normativity, and able-bodiedness. At the same time, we recognize that intergenerationality is not often included in this work of imagining altern-

ative futures. We also build on aging studies scholars (see: Sandberg and Marshall 2017; Changfoot et al. 2022; Chazan and Whetung 2022) who are rethinking aging futures, noting that children are not often considered in their analyses. Thus, we bridge critical writings on decolonial-queer-crip futures with aging and childhood studies, exploring the roles of radical intergenerationality and the centrality of children in conceptualizing and creating the worlds we desire.

We are inspired by artist-scholar Syrus Marcus Ware's reflections on the inherent value of both children and older adults in reworlding efforts:

> That is what capitalism does; it says that your main value is in the 18-35 year-old range when you're able to just consistently work and produce in order for somebody else to make money. So instead, we could say, "Oh, children are valuable just as they are, actually! Not as future workers but actually as they are. And our elders are valuable, you know? Not as former workers, but as inherently just as they are." ... So intergenerational movements are where it's at. And I think that will be a big thing as we move forward into our futures. (Kadoura, Besse, and McMullin 2020)

Following Ware and others, we examine some of the teachings brought forward by the YCAC youth as they interacted with a diverse group of adults, including Elder Alice Williams. Alice is a quilt artist, educator, and Anishinaabe Elder who resides at Curve Lake First Nation. In the role of "workshop Elder," Alice offered an opening for the workshop, ensured that our processes throughout the workshop aligned with our intended goals, and participated in research activities. (For Alice's contributions to other Aging Activisms workshops, see: Chazan and Baldwin 2021b; Chazan and Cole 2020). We explore the children's knowledges and ways of being as a praxis of radical imagination toward the intergenerational queer-crip-decolonial futures we desire.

We draw on a long history of scholar-activists who have positioned imagination as a critical skill in social justice efforts. Angela Davis (2006), for instance, explains that change only happens when regular people adopt "critical habits" of the mind, to imagine what might seem impossible in the present (7:42). Robin D. G. Kelley's seminal work *Freedom Dreams: The Black Radical Imagination* argues that "the catalyst for political engagement has never been misery, poverty, and oppression, but the promise of constructing a new world" (Kelley 2022, 16). Max Haiven and Alex Khasnabish (2014) have taken up "radical imagination" as a collective practice of imagining the world otherwise, what other scholars have called "speculating" (Cavanaugh 2023). While social justice movements are often oriented around fighting *against* systems of oppression (unmaking), activists and scholars are increasingly building *towards* better futures (making) (Scurr and Bowden 2021; Chazan, Baldwin, and Evans 2018). Kelley reminds us, "without new visions, we don't know what to build, only what to knock down" (Kelley 2022, 46). As Khasnabish explains, "radical imagination is a collective process of mapping what is, what was, and what might be" (Khasnabish 2020, 1720). Drawing from the past to build beautiful futures in the present is a "praxis of preconfiguration" (Scurr and Bowden 2021, 318). Ivy Scurr and Vannessa Bowden's analysis of anti-capitalist environmental justice activism argues that "the future is constantly being constructed through the here and now rather than being the result of a hoped for but never arriving revolution" (Scurr and Bowden 2021, 322).

In age-segregated, capitalist, colonial societies, seniors and youth are marginalized and deemed less economically productive (DeJong and Love 2016), yet given few opportunities to interact (Sifuentes 2022). Educational research has demonstrated the benefits of learning across generations for wellbeing, social integration, and social justice (Faulkner, Watson, and Shetterly 2023; McAllister, Briner, and Maggi 2019). In this article, we reflect on ways in which radical intergenerationality emerges in our own research processes as a core offering for those committed to reworlding research and praxis.

Specifically, we explore how, through intergenerational interactions, the YCAC youth modelled: (1) decolonial accountability without recourse to settler moves to innocence, undue shame, or guilt; (2) unfettered joy as anti-capitalist and decolonial practices; and (3) honouring of their own diverse bodyminds as roadmaps toward queer-crip future-making. By examining these three reworlding teachings offered by children and youth-elder

exchanges, we argue that radical intergenerationality should be conceptualized as core to decolonial, queer, crip futurities. Like Ware (2020), we concur that both older adults and children hold innate, inherent value in liberatory praxis.

In what follows, we outline our methodological approach. We then centre our article around three vignettes, interwoven with participants' words, images, and artwork, that demonstrate the three themes described above. Finally, we discuss what these findings offer to reworlding scholarship and practice.

Methods

Over the past decade, Aging Activisms has focused on developing intergenerational methodologies, recording hundreds of stories, with an emphasis on older activists. One of the core goals of the 2023 research workshop was to expand our methodologies to engage children, their ways of being, and their knowledges within an already intergenerational process, exploring the implications for scholarship and activism. Participants included seven YCAC youth (ages ten to fifteen), eight facilitators (in their twenties, thirties and forties), and fifteen additional adults (returning participants, aged thirty through one hundred). Participants included racialized activists, LGBTQ2IA+ organizers, disability activists, Raging Grannies, and Indigenous Elders and knowledge holders.

The YCAC began their climate justice work together in 2022 at the height of the "Omicron" wave of lockdowns, when some in the group were only nine years old. They initiated rallies, spoke and performed at climate events, and organized park clean-ups (kawarthaNOW 2022). We chose to partner with this group for several reasons. First, the YCAC is grassroots, youth-led, and not institutionally affiliated (i.e., not a school club or similar); the children self-organized, approaching adults in their families/community to support their efforts. Second, May's children were part of the group, as were the children of other research team members. These pre-existing relationships simplified the process in some ways, while also requiring us to attend even more critically to the ethics of full and informed consent. Finally, the demographics of the YCAC youth align with Aging Activisms' goals of centering diverse and lesser-told activist stories. The three founding YCAC members are, respectively, of Anishinaabe, Jewish, and Latinx backgrounds; all three identified as queer, and at least two with some form of neurodivergence/ learning disabilities. Among the larger group, many YCAC youth identify as queer or were raised in queer families and several are disabled or neurodivergent. We note, however, that at the Youth Stories of Reworlding workshop, seven of their group of ten attended, and all youth participants were white settlers.[1]

All workshop activities were designed to support both youth and adults to gain a sense of agency and build community around their work, guided by resources on youth climate anxiety and grief (Davenport 2021). As with all Aging Activisms research, our process revolved around relationship-building. Bringing in children added the creative methodological challenge of incorporating children, not just as equals, but as uniquely positioned knowledge holders with diverse and divergent needs and bodyminds (Cavanaugh 2023). Much thought went into the accessibility, safety, and inclusivity of protocols, practices, and spaces. Drawing on decolonial, crip, queer, feminist methodological practices (Rice, Jones, and Mündel 2022; Changfoot et al. 2022), organizing components of the workshop included: a large and diverse co-facilitation team; beginning, ending, and carrying many activities in circle; Indigenous leadership for openings, closing, active contributions, and feedback on processes; group contracting to shape our protocols (what became known as our "Ways of Being (Together)"); providing sensory kits; encouraging movement and fresh air outdoors; continual invitations to move freely and attend to our bodies; and offering chair-based modifications for every activity. We also attended carefully to mobility, food, and COVID safety needs, with facilitators explicitly dedicated to each of these tasks.

We undertook most of the research activities as a full intergenerational group, where adults, youth, and facilitators co-created and contributed. Research activities included drama games, collaging, creative writing, and

creating a wall of sticky notes with key words and images about our desired futures. On the second day, we invited youth to share stories and reflections on social change work in their communities. In a flip of conventional age roles, older participants interviewed youth. These interviews were recorded and edited into short media capsules, which have been shared online and in community (https://www.agingactivisms.org/youthstories).

In terms of documentation, we recorded facilitator debriefs at the end of each day. We also shared extensive, written observations and thoughts on a shared online document for a week after each workshop day, which acted as a form of collaborative analysis and debrief. We recorded group conversations throughout the workshop and photographed artwork, creative writing, and sticky notes. We also recorded and transcribed lengthy interviews with each youth before compressing these into shorter media capsules. Thus, the workshop produced far more research material—"data"—than we can discuss in this paper. (We have, however, offered shared knowledge produced in this workshop with wider communities via media screenings, and art installation at the public library, and on our website.)

Following a rigorous review and thematic coding of our collaborative analysis documents, as well as close readings of workshop transcripts, we decided to focus this paper on three emerging themes, which together begin to respond to our methodological question: what might children's participation in intergenerational research offer reworlding scholarship and activism? We have selected three pivotal moments from the workshop, along with artwork, photographs, and participant remarks to illustrate these themes throughout. Furthermore, for each theme, we connect to and extend key scholarship at the intersection of futurity research, childhood studies, and aging studies.

Doing Accountability Without Guilt and Shame

We began the first day of the workshop with welcomes from Elder Alice and from May Chazan. Following this, Velvet Lacasse, a white research team member, local teacher, and facilitator of YCAC, brought together our voices and bodies through song, play, and movement. She explained the importance of tracing the source of art and music and explained that the first song she was sharing came from West Africa, the Yoruba language, and a Liberian dance form called Funga. We sang the song, "Funga Alafia," with harmonies and clapping. Participants seemed engaged, if a little nervous.

Afterward, Alice spoke up: "Well, I'm sorry to bring this up, but I didn't like the first song that we did that was from Africa. And I wanna say how I see that. I see that as appropriation and I want to know, did anybody else think that?"

The room became tense. One participant immediately agreed with Alice. The rest of the room remained silent. Another participant, a white climate activist and former teacher in her late eighties, then chimed in: "I, uh, disagree with you." She went on to describe her belief that songs transcend appropriation and help establish a global consciousness and that, like the smudging we had started the day with, she could participate in them to create a sense of oneness.

May thanked Alice for her important intervention, said that in these moments we are all always learning, and suggested we take some time to talk this through more fully. A few more adults offered replies; none explicitly naming the issue as appropriation or our collective complicity in it. Most participants, despite being familiar with activist spaces and well versed in conversations about appropriation, seemed confused. Velvet listened actively, hands open in her lap, openness on her face. The overall feeling around the circle was heaviness—what the facilitators later named as shame.

Then, Alex, an eleven-year-old YCAC member, said: "Um about the song thing? I think that if it was taught by someone that learned it from their [own] culture, it would [...] make people more comfortable, because if

there's people teaching stuff that they've learned, then it's different […] it's not their culture." Alex brought clarity to the issue with a sense of lightness—not laden with shame, but rather imbued with genuine curiosity while holding Velvet and the group accountable in light of Alice's teaching. Alex's words shifted the conversation; nods and mumbles of approval around the circle suggested that everyone, including the person who initially defended the choice of this song, seemed to align with her words.

Ziysah von Bieberstein, a member of the research team, then offered to facilitate this unplanned conversation further, which continued for another twenty minutes, with contributions from many around the circle. Velvet continued to listen intently, modelling genuine humility and openness to learn from this moment. Alice, also listening carefully and with curiosity, asked the group why no one else spoke up about the song if they also felt uncomfortable. She asked for accountability particularly from the adults in the room, mostly settlers, but despite everyone trying very hard to remain open and present, our sense was that even one hour into the workshop, Alice's ask was largely met with heaviness. Indeed, this remaining heaviness was raised by many in our debrief that afternoon and throughout the following week.

Ziysah then suggested an unplanned break. As the adults took time to collect ourselves, checking in with each other, the youth modelled something else: they immediately left the room, grabbed snacks, and ran outside to play. This research moment offers a glimpse into the contributions that kids and older adults can make when they are brought into the circle as equals (Sifuentes 2022). In this interaction, we observed a flipping of age scripts and power dynamics: It was a youth who offered the group clarity around cultural appropriation; and it was an Elder who made herself vulnerable by insisting on settler accountability. In their notes and reflections after the fact (see figure 1), youth participants depicted this as a positive moment of learning. While many of the adult facilitators reflected that they felt the need to "solve" the tension, and to worry about Alice, Velvet, and the youth, the youth themselves did not appear stuck in such feelings. They engaged the discomfort with curiosity, learned from it, and then let it go.

Figure 1: A colourful page from Alex's workshop journal which reflects the conversation discussed above. It features words like "youth," "love," and "peace" as well as the phrases "conversation is key" and "honour others' words and thoughts."

This moment of tension and intergenerational collaboration taught us about the decolonial futures we desire. We recognize that the heaviness felt by the adults was a reflection of our care and dedication to accountability. And yet, our own shame and defensiveness had the potential to hinder our capacities to fully learn from that moment of conflict. The youth, conversely, were able to offer us a clearer way to think about appropriation, while moving towards accountability with more curiosity and less emotional, colonial baggage (Tuck and Yang 2012; Mackey 2016). We will return to this theme of doing settler accountability as part of our collective re-worlding work in our discussion.

Unfiltered Joy and Pleasure as Decolonial Future-Making

In the next session of the day, we asked participants to write about the world as they wanted it to be in twenty years. When the exercises were complete, there were about fifteen minutes left in the schedule before lunch. Ziysah suggested an unplanned go-around, inviting participants to share what was on their minds. The circle conversation began with reflections from adults about the writing exercise. But when the microphone reached the part of the circle where the youth were sitting, thirteen-year-old Mataeya said: "The only thing that comes to mind right now is that I love to climb trees and it is my favourite activity in the world besides swimming and I always wish I was up a tree rather than on the ground" (see figure 2).

The group laughed as the mic was passed. "I'm Marvin, my pronouns are he/him, and I like pizza."

"I'm Leif… I'm just gonna say one or two things I love. I love to write and I really love to swim…"

"My name is Haron, my pronouns are they/them, I also really like swimming and my favourite colour is blue. I just like to say my favourite colour, I don't know why."

Figure 2: Two YCAC youth pose smiling in a tree during one of the breaks at the workshop.

No one had asked the kids to share what they liked doing or their favourite colours; they spontaneously chose to share what they loved. The adults continued with more serious reflections about our process so far. When the microphone got to Alice, she reflected back on the youth's contributions: "I really like the way the younger people expressed how they love doing the things they love. I grew up in an era where we were taught duty before pleasure, If you don't keep your hands busy, Satan will find work for you. So as old as I am, I still prevent myself from doing the things I would like to do or love to do."

Later that day, after debriefing this moment with the research team, Ziysah unpacked what made this moment so significant: mycelial learning was happening across ages, across the room, in all directions. Alice offered teachings about smudging, medicines, and the four directions. Gender diverse youth unexpectedly taught her about decolonizing her own ideas about joy, pleasure, and childhood. Ziysah also reminded the group that, prior to agreeing to joining the workshop, Alice had asked about how we would ensure the children would behave, partly informed by her years as a schoolteacher; this suggested to us that she had not anticipated the kind of reciprocal learning that was taking place. We witnessed Alice, who was carrying around decades-old beliefs, shifting her thinking in real time by being around these children.

This second moment offers another lesson about valuing children's knowledges and ways of being in intergenerational social justice work. They brought an embodied knowledge of love and joy in the face of tough experiences of climate grief, injustice, and hate that they shared later on. While we consider how privilege may be at play in this particular group's ability to approach issues with positivity, it is also resonant with literature on decolonial joy and love (see: Simpson 2016; Sumac 2018). Alice received a teaching from the youth about permissiveness to love what you love and to embrace joy and pleasure toward decolonial futures. At the same time, she expressed sadness about her own childhood conditioning.

Attuning to Embodied Knowledges as Crip Reworlding

In planning, the research team was keenly aware of our tendency to suspend our own embodied needs in service of caring for participants. We discussed how we might create more easeful spaces for everyone involved, building care for ourselves and crip methodologies into our processes, but did not arrive at full solutions. During the workshop, the youth, again, offered important insights into honouring our diverse bodyminds.

In being themselves and honouring their needs, youth participants consistently reminded us that we all have bodies. They did not suppress their embodied knowledges about needing breaks and movement. Throughout the entire workshop, they felt free to sit on the floor, doodle, fidget, play, and move around. After wolfing down lunch, they would immediately make their way outside to climb trees, skip rope, and ride bikes. Throughout the workshop, the youth were not afraid to interrupt "serious" research activities; they did not feel the need to perform their respect of the research process in the same way we adults have been conditioned to.

Through their actions, youth reminded adult participants that we could also wiggle, change positions, and divert attention when needed. The research team noted many ways adults were learning a crip way of reworlding from these interactions. For instance, during the creative writing workshop, Cam, a neurodivergent, trans, fifteen-year-old, began the session by eschewing their chair to sit on the floor. Within minutes, facilitators Megan and Melissa Baldwin, both in their twenties, mirrored this position (see figures 3 and 4), experiencing an instant sense of bodily relief. Both felt they only thought to do this due to Cam's modelling.

Figure 3: Cam sits cross-legged on the floor, writing, during a workshop, while a group of YCAC sit behind them sitting in their chairs.

Figure 4: Megan (co-author) and Melissa sitting on the floor, writing. Melissa is bent forward, book on floor, while Megan leans back against her chair, writing on her lap

We also noted these crip teachings emerging in participant artwork. After lunch on the first day, we collaged in response to the question: "What do you imagine you will need to make this community a happy/healthy/good place to grow old(er)?" The tables were arranged in a large square and covered in old magazines, paper, scissors, and glue sticks. Participants sat along the outer edges of the tables, facing each other, young and old side-by-side. This was a relaxed social activity, where connections were forged through sharing art supplies and magazine images. Some adults took time to think through the prompt, while youth quickly began cutting out images of ice cream cones and cats. Melissa later reflected: "One great gift of intergenerational spaces with

youth is that they encourage us adults to get over ourselves and have some fun and think through doing rather than just before doing."

Despite the collage session being fairly short and lighthearted, we noticed teachings from the kids in some adults' collages. We were especially touched by Alice's collage (see figure 5), which centers a large soaker tub. Below this image, and over a lined cue card, in thick blue ink, she wrote: "Someone to run my bath—someone to clean me up—rub, scrub, wash my hair. Help me out of the tub. Dry me up. Comb my hair—put beautifully smelling stuff on me. Dress me beautifully. Clean up after me." At the bottom, in pencil, she added: "Pamper me. If I had a rocking chair." Here, Alice imagines what she needs to grow old(er) is having her bodily needs cared for, experiencing rest and pleasure in her aging body.

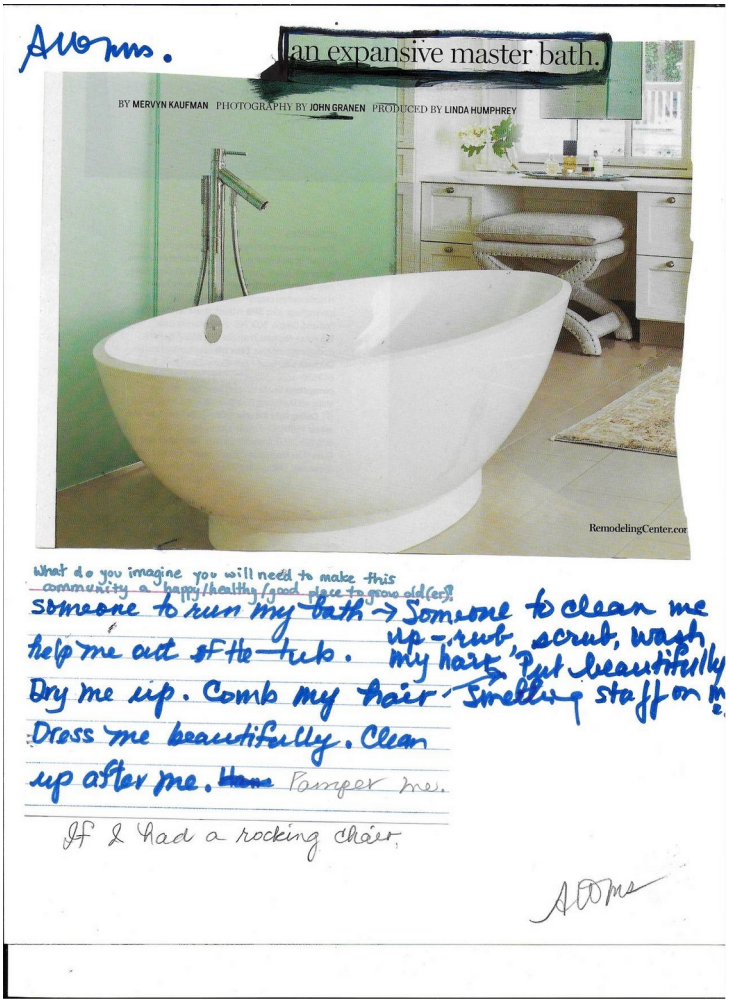

Figure 5: A scan of Alice's collage, an image of a soaker tub in the middle, and her written description around it. Alice has signed her name in the bottom right corner.

This expression of vulnerability, bodily desire, and care for her aging body was received by many of the research facilitators, and indeed by many of the youth, as a change in how Alice initially entered the workshop, one which very likely was influenced by the youth reminding her to love what she loves, and to embrace pleasure without shame. In a show of reciprocity and in response to her collage, the youth gifted Alice a basket of bath products at the end of the second workshop day.[2]

Thus, the children and adults together reminded us that movement, play, and rest are the work of reworlding. By honouring embodied knowledges, youth made futures in the present that include diverse bodyminds and

bodily desires. These lessons were received by adults who then reflected back messages about embracing care, rest, and unique needs. Pushing back against ableist and capitalist-colonial norms of conforming and enduring, these intergenerational exchanges imagined and created caring, crip, queer otherworlds (Kafer 2021; Piepzna-Samarasinha 2022).

Discussion

We learned much about queer-crip-decolonial futures from bringing children and older adults together to imagine socially just futures in an environment where all were well-supported and respected. By being themselves in this space, the youngest participants taught the rest of us about ways of (1) doing settler accountability, (2) centering joy, and (3) honouring diverse bodyminds. Their ways of being offered us glimpses of the futures we desire and helped us build these futures in the space we created, in a process of radical imagination (Haiven and Khasnabish 2014; Kelley 2022). In this section, we discuss each of these three themes or reworlding teachings in more detail and in conversation with existing scholarship.

First, we turn to the moment when Alice called for accountability. Although many adults were actively working to remain open, most were also experiencing feelings of shame for participating in and not recognizing appropriation, working through whether we were really complicit. As Eve Tuck and Wayne Yang explain, grappling with being a benefactor and participant in settler colonialism is uncomfortable and, in an attempt to "reconcile settler guilt and complicity and rescue settler futurity," settlers take part in a variety of evasions, known as "settler moves to innocence" (Tuck and Yang 2012, 1; 9). This also resonates with the Gesturing Towards Decolonial Futures Collective's (2020) descriptions of settler denials that restrict our ability to imagine otherwise. Robin D. G. Kelley explains that radical imagination is constricted by the colonial conditions of daily life: "We are constantly putting out fires, responding to emergencies, finding temporary refuge, all of which make it difficult to see anything other than the present" (Kelley 2022, 56).

The youth in the room offered something different. Rather than becoming preoccupied with settler guilt or mental gymnastics, they accepted discomfort, expressed genuine curiosity, and were grateful for the learning. In a moment of uncertainty, it was the Elder and the children that led the way. In other words, when kids and older adults were brought to the circle as equal co-learners and co-carers, we witnessed mutually beneficial relationships. Jamila Lyiscott and her colleagues (2021) call this the "validation loop" of intergenerational relationships, where support, respect, and trust are looped back between children and adults. These intergenerational relationships may offer a way to create long lasting change, "co-creating a future that is local, decolonial, and autonomous" (bergman 2022, 8). Everyone in the room learned about moving through colonial discomfort with grace and curiosity when Alex and Alice spoke up, co-building futures based on authentic accountability in the here and now.

Second, our research highlighted the role of children in bringing joy, love, and pleasure to the forefront of activist-research spaces. While there was very clear energy and happiness surrounding the youth's actions (skipping, tree-climbing, stating what they love), there was also a complexity in this intergenerational space that we can perhaps learn from in our re-worlding efforts. We recognize, for instance, the contrast between the experiences of childhood for these well-supported white, settler youth and the childhood depicted by Alice, who was taught from a young age to connect joy to evil. The carefree approach of these youth emerges as a function of their privilege, at least in part, resonating with scholars like Rebecca Epstein, Jamila J. Blake, and Thalia González (2017) and Jessica Lu and Catherine Knight Steele (2019) who note that Black children are often deemed adult-like and not afforded the same innocence of non-Black children.

At the same time, the teachings of young joy were also punctuated with grief. We witnessed Alice expressing grief for not allowing herself to "love what she loves." On our second day together, when the children were interviewed by adult participants, they told stories of grief over the global climate crisis, over the housing,

poverty, and addiction crises in their community, and over personal experiences of pandemic isolation and homophobia, transphobia, racism, and antisemitism in school. This grief was clearly fuelling their activism and desire to band together; in many ways, their unfettered joy was despite their grief and part of their activism.

This intermixing of joy and grief as part of reworlding practices resonates with Smokii Sumac's (2018) poetry collection in which he writes about the importance of Indigenous, Two-Spirit joy, resilience, laughter, and love, alongside trauma and oppression (Sumac 2018; Sumac 2020). Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2016) also writes about finding moments of love and strength in the face of tragic circumstances, often found in land, language, and resistance to colonialism. Similarly, Karen Morris, Adam Greteman, and Nic Weststrate (2022) suggest that queer joy is almost always intertwined with heartache. Morris and her colleagues (2022) and Burkholder et al. (2024) argue that queer joy and euphoria are punctuated by an underbelly of grief, heartache, and ambivalence. Thus, we come to understand that the joy of the youth in our research exists alongside and in resistance to their own grief in/for the world. Their insistence on pleasure and love is emphasized in contrast to Alice's colonial upbringing and in-the-moment unlearning. Insisting on joy allows us to make the futures we desire, even while confronting the grief that is present.

Finally, the interactions of children and adults in our research revealed the queer, crip, and aging embodied knowledges that can emerge in intergenerational spaces that value bodily autonomy and diversity. Such knowledges, we believe, are urgently needed as we work to make liberatory futures through and in our research practices. In planning for this intergenerational space, we drew on the works of scholar-activists working to challenge dominant narratives of disability and aging as deficiency—instead positioning diversity of age, bodily ability, neurotype and ways of being as collective wisdom. We consulted the writing of Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha who asserts that disabled people develop crip emotional intelligence with their own unique skills, sciences, and technologies (Piepzna-Samarasinha 2018, 69) and that of Linn Sandberg who recognizes the potential of aging embodiment with her concept of "affirmative old age" (Sandberg 2013, 19).

We recognized that our invitations to fidget, move, take breaks, get snacks, and use the washroom freely pose a deep contrast to youth's daily experiences of our colonial school system. As bergman (2022) explains, our current education system is built to serve white, middle-to-upper class, neurotypical, able-bodied, cis children from hetero-nuclear families; kids are made to quiet themselves and their individuality in schools. Children are denied bodily autonomy by restrictions in restroom use, dress, movement, expression, and activity (Sifuentes 2022; Desmarais 2022). Rather than celebrating and centering the inherent knowledges of children, schools often act as what Bettina Love (2019) calls "spirit-murderers," particularly for Black, Indigenous, racialized, queer/trans, and otherwise marginalized youth.

When encouraged to honour their own needs and autonomy, we witnessed how the spirits and embodied knowledges of youth flourished, contributing to crip reworlding in real-time. Together, the kids and adults in this research modelled self and community care and knowledge of their own bodyminds by honouring their embodied needs through interrupting, moving, and taking breaks. Coming to the space with a variety of neurotypes and physical abilities, participants envisioned and enacted crip futures in their artistic contributions, storytelling, and everyday actions. These real-time futures did not eliminate disability, aging, or difference; instead, they valued and centered our multiplicity of needs, making room for all of us (Chazan 2023; Kafer 2021).

Conclusions

Many Indigenous and Black communities have long honoured the teachings children offer to movements for social change and to resurgence and reworlding work. Nishnaabeg writer Leanne Betasamoke Simpson (2011) explains:

> In the pre-colonial Nishnaabeg nation, children were highly respected people, valued for their insights, their humour, and their contributions to families and communities at each stage of their lives. Children were seen as Gifts, and parenting was an honour. Coming from the spirit-world at birth, children were closer to that world than their adult counterparts, and were therefore considered to have greater spiritual power—a kind of power highly respected amongst the Nishnaabeg. Adults had a lot to learn from these small teachers. (122-3)

Black scholar-artist-activist, Syrus Marcus Ware, based in Tkaronto, likewise explains that the Black Panther Party described children's right to autonomy and self-determination in their 1970s treaty on the rights of children (Kadoura, Besse, and McMullin 2020). In our introduction, we cited Ware asserting that "children are valuable just as they are" and that "intergenerational movements are where it is at." As two white-settler academics, we wish to honour these long-held conceptions of children's wisdoms as we, too, explore and support the teachings youth and intergenerational exchange bring to the collective work of radical imagination and reworlding.

The child-Elder knowledges emerging in this research offer specific examples of how well-supported and critically-conceptualized intergenerationality might contribute to the work of imagining and building decolonial, queer, crip futures. The young people in this research offered core teachings for all of us engaged in reworlding research and practice. Perhaps these teachings were possible because the children had spent less time than adults being conditioned by the oppressive workings of colonialism, capitalism, and ableism; because of their privileged childhoods as white-settler, middle-class kids; and/or because our research protocols permitted them to draw on the inherent intelligence of their queer-crip bodyminds and their own experiences of grief and marginality. Through their embodied knowledges, ways of being, actions, and interactions, they taught us about settler accountability, joy, and diverse bodyminds, reminding us of the futures we want most, and helping to build these futures together in the present moment. Our research, thus, offers a call for radical intergenerationality to be more widely taken up as core to imagining and making decolonial, queer, crip futurities.

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Endnotes

1. Of interest, 6 of the 7 youth participants were also Jewish, which, in the context of Peterborough, Canada, is very much a minority/marginalized identity. Several mentioned never having had another Jewish friend in their classes at school.

2. It is standard in Aging Activisms research for May to offer gifts to participants. The idea for this gift came in conversation between May and Alex, as we looked through the collages from the first week. May procured the products and Alex asked if it could be given from the youth as a thank-you.

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