Transversal and Postmodern Feminist Praxis in Everyday Politics

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Abstract: Feminist praxis is usually a conscious, reflexive process of moving from theory to application in order to create transformation. We want to expand the scope of feminist praxis, however, to include moments in which feminist theory explains political transformations that may not be deliberate but that result in a feminist outcome: the pursuit of gender equality through personal and political transformation. This paper uses a dataset of online comments generated after the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *R. v. N.S.* as a case study, and it sits in conversation with postmodern and transversal feminist theorists, particularly the recent work of Patricia Hill Collins (2017) that builds on Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) and others, to argue that political action is most effective when transversal practice is layered onto intersectional politics and that, despite Hill Collins' concern that political practice has yet to move to effective transversalism (2017, 1471), transversal feminist praxis can be found in examples of everyday politics which offer hope for social transformation.

Keywords: transversal feminism, postmodern feminism, praxis

Introduction: Praxis and Postmodern Transversal Politics

Feminist praxis is usually a conscious, reflexive, process of moving from theory to application in order to create transformations (see, for example, Allen 2000; Archer Mann 2012; Cho, Crenshaw, and McCall 2013; De Reus, Few, and Balter Blume 2005; Evans 2016; Hesse-Biber 2012; Naples 2013; and Sharp et al. 2017). We want to expand the scope of feminist praxis, however, to include moments in which feminist theory explains political transformations that may not be deliberate, but that result in a feminist outcome: the pursuit of gender equality through personal and political transformation. Finding these moments is important at a time when, politically, it seems that anti-equality movements are gaining ground. This paper uses a dataset of online comments generated after the Supreme Court of Canada decision in R. v. N.S. as a case study. It sits in conversation with postmodern and transversal feminist theorists, particularly the recent work of Patricia Hill Collins (2017) that builds upon the previous work of Nira Yuval-Davis (1997) and others, to argue that political action is most effective when transversal practice is layered onto intersectional politics. Further, we argue that despite Hill Collins' concern that political practice has yet to move to effective transversalism (2017, 1471), transversal feminist praxis can be found in examples of everyday politics which offer hope for social transformation.

Postmodern and transversal feminist theories explain people's political transformations. In the current anti-intellectual political climate, we want to illustrate how layering theory onto everyday political transformations reveals that transformative praxis can be found around us, even when it is not consciously deliberate. That is, transversal and postmodern feminist theories, which challenge the false binaries that divide people into oppositional political positions, do not just explain the roots of gender inequality but also illuminate the pathways to politics that can be identified as feminist in their outcomes (see, for example, Kolmar and Bartkowski 2010, 2-6; and Lorber 2012).

Postmodern feminist praxis challenges rigid identity boundaries between "self" and "other," nationally and individually, and produces points of connection across identity groups. It "undermines foundational categories by insisting that bodies, identities, and statuses are contingent—time-bound, situational, and culturally shaped" (Lorber 2012, 285). Feminist postmodern theorists argue that the sex-gender binary is a false construct produced by cultural beliefs and practices at particular moments in time and place. The intersectional postmodern approach extends the binary beyond sex-gender to multiple categories, allowing analysis along different valences to undermine fixed binaries like "Black/White," "gay/straight," "abled/disabled," "young/old," etc.

Transversal feminist praxis developed during the same period as postmodern feminism in the late twentieth century and emerged from coalition-building groups where women worked "not just with different others but with … enemies" (Bastian 2006, 1039; also see Cockburn 1998; Yuval-Davis 1994, 179-197; and Yuval-Davis 1997). Transversal feminism recognizes that "politics based on a homogenous notion of identity is spectacularly unable to deal with the problem of working toward peace" (Bastian 2006, 1039). Instead, the theory argues that "by questioning how one understands one's sense of identity, by reducing defensive reactions and attempting to broaden one's point of view, less aggressive responses to conflict can become more than a naïve hope" (Bastian 2006, 1039). The processes of opening up identity to engage fluidly with similarity in others is embedded in postmodern feminism, and transversal processes based on shifting one's identity position diffused many arguments in our dataset, in part because transversal praxis allowed people to "keep one's own perspective on things while empathizing and respecting others" (Yuval-Davis 1994, 193).

Methods

We explore possibilities for transformation using the online comments that appeared after the Supreme Court of Canada's decision on women's right to veil

in the courtroom in *R. v. N.S*, as a case study. The Canadian Supreme Court case *R. v. N.S.* considered the right of a Muslim woman to wear a *niqab* while testifying as a victim in a sexual assault trial. The court determined the case involved a conflict between the religious rights of N.S., protected under s. 2 of the *Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* (*Charter*), and the s. 7 *Charter* rights of the accused to a full and fair defense, which lead to an ambiguous decision: that Muslim women could veil in court so long as the presiding judge did not see that as an impediment to the trial process. The very ambiguity of the decision prompted legal commentary. Critics have asserted that the decision will not permit women to veil in court, as most judges will deem that the inability to see the face, and therefore to assess the credibility of the witness, constitutes an impediment to a fair trial and a full defence (Chambers and Roth 2014, 382).

The case divided the court and sparked intense public debate. Speaking for the majority in *R. v. N.S.*, Chief Justice Beverley McLachlin admitted that the issue of "effective cross-examination and accurate assessment of a witness's credibility" was hotly disputed. She asserted that "provisions of the Criminal Code … and judicial pronouncements" presume that the "ability to see a witness's face is an important feature of a fair trial" and that "this common law assumption cannot be disregarded lightly" (*R. v. N.S.*, [2012], 3 SCR 726, para 21). Although she noted that "if … women are required to remove the *niqab* while testifying against their sincere religious belief they will be reluctant to report offences and pursue their prosecution" (*R. v. N.S.*, [2012], 3 SCR 726, para 37), she also asserted that the interests of the accused and "safeguarding the repute of the administration of justice" were more compelling in this case since "no less is at stake than an individual's liberty" (*R. v. N.S.*, [2012], 3 SCR 726, para 38). Concurring, Canadian Supreme Court Justices LeBel and Rothstein asked whether wearing niqab in any trial was compatible "with the constitutional values of openness and religious neutrality in contemporary democratic, but diverse, Canada" (*R. v. N.S.*, [2012], 3 SCR 726, para 60).

We found Islamophobia and Orientalist sexist discourse at the heart of the Majority's decision and we have argued that the decision ultimately legitimized racist and sexist stereotypes that deny Muslim women's full participation in Canadian society (Chambers and Roth 2014, 386-389). Only Justice Abella, in dissent, considered the structural discrimination the anonymized N.S. faced as a Muslim woman, and asserted that "the harm to a complainant of requiring her to remove her niqab while testifying will generally outweigh any harm to trial fairness" (*R. v. N.S.*, [2012], 3 SCR 726, para 86). The majority found that a judge would have to make a decision in each individual case as to whether or not a *niqab* would be allowed, and provided a framework for such decisions (*R. v. N.S.*, [2012], 3 SCR 726, para 38). This ambiguity led to a large amount of online debate. For example, in response to statements that the Supreme Court should have prohibited the *niqab* in all cases to protect Canada from "foreign ways," one commenter interjected: "Breaking news just now … : Supreme Court of Canada KILLS Canada" (ArtisteNow 2012). Another less acerbic writer added: "This is a tough one, with sound Charter arguments on both sides. It could go either way, and—whichever way they rule—they'll be wrong. // Glad I'm only a lowly HuffPost commenter today, and not a Supreme Court Justice" (Anonymous 2012).

In online comments, people debated the decision and its future application from their own perspectives on human rights and the law, which provided a breadth and depth of data we could draw on to illustrate how postmodern and transversal feminist theory can be applied to everyday encounters and personal transformation. We examined discussions on three mainstream Canadian media sites, *Maclean's Magazine*, *Huffington Post*, and the *National Post*, where the most substantive and responsive commentary occurred. These sites provided us with over 200 discussion and comment entries from which to draw examples of praxis in everyday interactions. Transversal and postmodern feminism explain how discussants moved from positions of political opposition to build peace, understanding, and bridges. Although

the discussants may or may not have deliberately used feminist approaches in their attempts to re-align oppressive attitudes—given the nature of on-line discussion, it is impossible to know what people do not divulge—it is clear that transversal and post-modern feminist praxis, deliberately or unknowingly brought into being, were at the heart of peace-building praxis.

The Political Context of Personal Positions: Islamophobia in the Economic North

The oppressive binary of us/them identity politics appeared in *R. v. N.S.*, in both the court's decision and the online debates; a brief contextualization of the political context of the case is therefore useful. It seems unnecessary to write that Muslims in non-Muslim countries have faced increasing surveillance and Islamophobia since 9/11. We have no interest in examining how Islamophobia is perpetuated online: our focus is on feminist praxis in everyday encounters. We certainly join other cultural critics to de-nounce Islamophobia as oppressive (see for example: Arat-Koc 2005; Awan 2016; Cammaerts 2009; Carr 2016; Haque 2010; Kahn and Kellner 2004, 89, 93-94; Love 2017, 83-116; and Razack 2008, 173) and we recognize that the intersection of sexism and Is-lamophobia produces particular outcomes. For ex-ample, media reports from the United Kingdom suggest Islamophobic violence is often gendered, with women who veil in any way (*hijab*, *niqab*, or *burqa*) bearing the brunt of verbal and physical at-tacks (Vidal 2014; see also Perry 2014). Many schol-ars and activists have documented how veils have become symbols of both the threat of fundamentalist extremism and, paradoxically, women's vulnerability to abuse and subordination under purdah patriarch-ies (see for example, McDonough 2003, 126-130; and Simpson, James, and Mack 2011).

In their brief to the Court in *R. v. N.S.*, for example, the Canadian Council on American-Islamic Rela-tions wrote: "[I]n popular discourse they [*niqab*-wearing women] are either vilified as fanatics who refuse to integrate, or infantilized as victims who are prevented from seeing their own oppression" (qtd. in Chambers and Roth 2014, 386). LEAF, the Women's Legal Education and Action Fund in Canada, simil-arly argued as intervenors in *R. v. N.S.*:

> Although the small number of women who wear the niqab in Canada are not a new phe-nomenon, various national and international events … have changed the political climate in which they are viewed.… The niqab is per-ceived as belonging to a culture/religion/value-system which is stereotyped as extremist and inimical to Western cultures and values. In this context, the niqab has become emblematic of an irreconcilable "clash of cultures." (2013)

At the heart of "clashes of cultures" are the national and individual identities people use to situate them-selves, their nation, and their perceived nation-al/identity values in relation to others. These identity-based politics have proven difficult to over-come, as Hill Collins points out (2017, 1471), but postmodern and transversal theories show how the barriers created by entrenched identity politics can be transformed through praxis into feminist outcomes.

Postmodern Feminism: Identity Permeability and Feminist Praxis

As noted above, postmodernism challenges the tradi-tional modern narratives about contained and care-fully bounded identity-subjects. In the debates produced by *R. v. N.S.*, the primary binaries invoked were cultural: West/Non-West, Non-Muslim/Muslim, Canadian/Foreigner, Liberated/Oppressed. That the debates engendered by *R. v. N.S.* centred around the question of controlling women's bodies—what wo-men are or are not allowed to wear—makes these de-bates gendered. Like Homi Bhabha's "third space" (1994), online comments sections are liminal because they require active identity production. They usually lack the visual and aural signifiers that are often used to produce identity, thus revealing that identity posi-tions, including gender, are performative: they must be named in an online space and are not inherent or intrinsic (Lorber 2012, 284). In our dataset, there is

ample textual evidence of how people construct themselves in relation to other nationalities or communities, and in relation to those whom they perceive to be, and define as, outsiders. As postmodern feminist Judith Butler has argued, "bodies" are "a kind of materialization governed by regulatory norms"; she probes how the "materialization of the norm in body formation produce[s] a domain of abjected bodies" that are perceived to be "less-than" those who are "normative" (Butler 1993, 15-16). Critic Shahnaz Khan has further argued that liminal third spaces are places where contradictions in identity construction can eschew colonial authority to produce postmodern, transnational subjects who are more likely to recognize the shared foreignness of identity positions (1998). At minimum, the online comments sections in our dataset were places where multiple "authentic" Canadian identities existed simultaneously, thus disrupting any claims to one authentic cultural or national identity through the very existence of pluralism.

This pluralism allowed the ideology of Canadian multiculturalism to support a more fluid postmodern identity. If not in practice, at least ideologically, multicultural Canada has the possibility to be plural, porous, and encompassing. Since 1971, Canada has been formally multicultural and multiculturalism was enshrined legally in the *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms* in 1982. In one definition, Canadian multiculturalism encourages and supports cultural pluralism, diversity, and equality for all. In practice, as many critics have noted, it has been a political tool aimed at social control and the containment of inter-ethnic violence (see, for example, Allahar 1998, 340-342) and is often used to silence cultural dissent by obfuscating racist and xenophobic structures. Unfortunately, therefore, in practice it usually creates a "discourse of diversity" wherein those who are "multicultural … are merely … tolerated, but not accepted as 'real' citizens" (James 2005, 19-20; see also Bannerji 2000). Thus, critics argue that multiculturalism is an effective Eurocentric tool because it defines people as being "multicultural" in relation to an invisible core group of "real" citizens who are, in

Canada, normalized to be of white British and French settler descent (Jiwani 2006, 189; see also Simpson, James, and Mack 2011).

The multiculturalism invoked at the grassroots level in our dataset, however, appealed to the ideal of Canadian multiculturalism: a society that seeks and respects cultural diversity, that works against racism and xenophobia, and that espouses the benefits of a diverse community. As Anton Allahar writes, although multiculturalism does little to address structural racism, "[w]here it works … multiculturalism is a very effective form of resistance to racism" (1998, 338-339). For Canada's national identity construction, multiculturalism is the "Canadian Way" (Driedger 1989, 238) and is often used to differentiate Canada from the United States (Allahar 1998, 340). When this form of multiculturalism is invoked, it appeals to a Canadian identity that is not culturally fixed, except insofar as it is culturally proliferous. The challenges that multiculturalism has made to dominant systems of authority and its connections to the postmodern undermining of grand narratives have been articulated in literary theory (see for example: Caton 1997; Kamboureli 2007; Mohanty 1997; and Poster 2009; and Yanyu 2004, among others), which argues that a cultural identity of multiply-located cultures is democratisation that reflects the fluidity of postmodern identities. This is not to say that identifying permeability is the same as easily overcoming racist structures. As Sarah Ahmed (2000) has warned, permeability is easily "achievable for those whose experiences of race are not lived as a barrier to entering of even inhabiting certain spaces. For those who are marginalised by the racial norm [of whiteness], racial identity means living with constraint and fixity" (58). It is the case, however, that multiculturalism was often invoked by commenters who identified as Muslim and/or racialized in a call to the permeability of what it is to be Canadian.

Samira Kanji and Azeezah Kanji, for example, noted in their *National Post* article that the Supreme Court decision "provides a timely opportunity for some much-needed reflection on the way we talk about the

niqab in Canada." They call for "multicultural respect" and cite s. 27 of the *Charter* which states that rights must be "interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage" of Canada (2012). Many others argued similarly. In a debate that took place on *Huffington Post* (*HuffPost*), Nellie_Niqabi wrote: "I demand respect because that's what I have been promised when I came here. … And by respect, I mean having the freedom to dress the way I want, and be myself" (2012a). Overt Enigma asked of readers: "What do you deem more important, protecting the charter of rights and freedoms and working with the communities to find a … solution, or to embrace paranoia … and portray this one ruling as the 'end of times'" (2012b). Brian 25 argued the benefits of a culturally diverse Canada in his comment back to right-wing journalist Barbara Kay's article in the *National Post*: "We are a multicultural country where all cultures and traditions are equally honored and respected. … You are stuck in the past where Canadian meant western or European. It doesn't anymore. Today it means all cultures and traditions" (2012). Cindy Zheng, commenting on Mike Blanchfield's *Maclean's* article, similarly wrote: "I think the court was wise to avoid a simple rule that is a one-size-fits-all approach. Since we live in a multi-cultural society, we must be prepared to accommodate others, whether that be in the courtroom or at the office" (2012). And, in response to novabird's statement that Muslim women who "do not wish to respect Canadian laws … can return to their countries of origin" (2012), Cindy V. asked, "Where are they supposed to go if they were born in Canada?" (2012). These commenters draw on the fluid, postmodern national identity of multiculturalism to argue for personal and political transformation.

In doing so, they eschewed a rigid, single definition of "Canadian" in favour of cultural pluralism, and thus embodied a liminal and postmodern worldview where different cultural practices sit comfortably together. In such everyday political views, veiling was often described as a choice made in a free and democratic multicultural country. For example, Mike T., in response to some commenters' arguments that allowing veiled women in court would change the very nature of Canada, asked: "Where does it say 'we' have to change? No one is forcing anyone to change. Where does it say that Canadian women HAVE to wear the *niqab* while testifying. It's a choice" (2012b). Similarly, Nicholas T adopted a comfortable postmodern position in relation to national identity when he wrote:

> If you bothered to ask the women themselves, you might find that they … wear the *niqab* by choice. If so, to tell them they can't wear one is to take away their freedom to decide, and that would be an act of oppression, would it not? How is it any of your business to push your interpretation on her and brand it as the accepted 'Canadian' one? (2012)

In support of Nicholas T, and in answer to arguments that women who veil are oppressed, Nellie_Niqabi responded that she feels "totally liberated," and argued that veiling allows women to be "judged" for their minds, "not the way we look" (2013).

For those who employed an everyday personal politics of postmodern multiculturalism, the gendered aspect of the case was important. Some commenters made arguments for N.S.'s rights *as a woman* who must unveil in front of her alleged assailants after years of sexual assault. Liz_Wilson_2 wondered "what is more important in this situation, to prosecute the men that have assaulted her—giving justice and access to legal recourse for Islamic women in Canada or to force her to appear unveiled?" (2012a). Mike T. argued that the context of the rape trial is important: "To force her to figuratively disrobe in front of the alleged rapists is really disturbing" (2012a). Mike T.'s use of cultural relativism (whether conscious or not) revealed the effects of postmodernism at work: disrobing was understood differently on the basis of cultural differences. When novabird accused Mike T. of hyperbolizing because "[m]any thousands of North American women face their accusers in court without covering their faces" (2012), they missed Mike T's point about postmodern cultural pluralism, which he

reiterated: the women who appear unveiled in court, he responded, have "been brought up in an atmosphere where showing their face is a normal, everyday happening. This woman wasn't. It's just a basic human kindness to a traumatized woman" (2012c).

Other responses to novabird's position that women must unveil in court also reveal the strength of postmodern multiculturalism in relation to the law. RK2880 wrote, "Read the decision—according to Canadian law, wearing a *niqab* IS acceptable. Women who wear it while testifying are respecting Canadian laws" (2012). Overt Enigma argued: "Forcing any group of people to conform to your understanding and system of values is contrary to multiculturalism, tolerance and the values upon which Canada was founded" (2012a). Although Torontosaurous denounced veiling in general, he also wrote, "[f]rom a legal stand point [sic],as [sic] long as the judge rules that this is indeed the woman that is the accuser,and [sic] not an imposter,and [sic] those charged agree that the woman is who she says she is,I [sic] see no problem" (2012a). All of these commenters' arguments illustrate a strong, if unconscious, commitment to postmodernity: in order for them to make claims that Canadians occupy multiple, relative, cultures, they must adopt a comfortable postmodern position in which national identity is permeable and diverse.

That they do so in order to defend a woman's right to dress as she chooses illustrates that postmodern feminist praxis can be found in unlikely places. It is not apparent that any of the commenters were consciously working from a position of feminist politics, which is our point: there are hopeful signs of cultural change in this wider appearance of what is very likely unconscious postmodern feminist praxis. While some commenters did not immediately espouse a postmodern view and began their discussion with a fixed, bounded definition of what it is to be "Canadian," when they changed their view, their changes can be explained by transversal feminist praxis: the process that allows the movement from a fixed to a permeable identity and which is closely connected to the postmodern aims of complicating identity politics. As Pa-

tricia Hill Collins argues, "analysis is important, yet action also matters," and "transversal politics [is] a form of political engagement that ha[s] important implications for understanding organized political resistance" (2017, 1467).

Postmodern Theory to Transversal Praxis: Rooting and Shifting

In our study, transformations in people's personal political views often occurred when discussants made empathetic connections between Islamophobic oppression and their own experiences, leading them to articulate similarly-held Outsider positions. This moved them from a fixed identity position to postmodern permeability, and on to transversal praxis. Nira Yuval-Davis, arguably the most prolific writer on transversal praxis, explains that transversal politics "developed as an alternative to the assimilationist 'universalistic' politics of the Left, on the one hand, and to identity politics, on the other hand" (2006, 281). Transversal feminism is "dialogical standpoint epistemology … a recognition that from each positioning the world is seen differently, and thus any knowledge based on just one positioning is 'unfinished'" (2006, 281; see also Harding 1991; and Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002). Like postmodernism, transversal feminism recognizes that identities are complex:

> People who identify themselves as belonging to the same collectivity or social category can actually be positioned very differently in relation to a whole range of social locations (e.g., class, gender, ability, sexuality, stage in life cycle). At the same time, people with similar positionings and/or identities can have very different social and political values. (Yuval-Davis 2006, 281; see also Yuval-Davis 1994, 1997, and Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002)

Recently, Patricia Hill Collins reflected on her 1998 article "The Tie that Binds," where she argued that combating race-based violence required "a more sophisticated transversal politics that took intersecting power relations into account," because "intersectional

analyses, on their own, are unlikely to yield … effective political solutions to violence" (2017, 1460-61). She noted that "action matters … transversal politics [is] a form of political engagement that [has] important implications for understanding organized political resistance" (2017, 1467). Drawing on the work of Yuval-Davis, Hill Collins examines coalition-building within and outside of historically constructed group identities (2017, 1469-72) and argues that the Black Lives Matter movement shows how the "flexible solidarity honed through Black women's politics" can work with "transversal politics as a framework for coalitions among groups that inform anti-violence initiatives" (2017, 1471).

Coalition building is important: as Yuval-Davis pointed out, the result of mid-twentieth century hegemonic constructions of feminist politics was "identity politics." From an intersectional perspective, the constructions of anti-racist politics in the civil rights movement shared the same outcomes (see also Moghadam 1994). Yuval-Davis explains that

> in such politics all the members of the oppressed social category are constructed as homogenous; all dimensions of social location are reduced into the primary one. Thus there is no differentiation in this approach between categorical locations, social identities, and political values … identity politics conflates individual and collective identities, therefore assuming that any member of any social category or identity can speak for all the other members of that category … "as a woman," "as a black," and so forth. (2006, 277)

She argues that early corrections of the gender hegemony in the mainstream feminist movement only continued to reify essentialist constructions of identity by simply fragmenting and multiplying descriptors: i.e. "as a disabled woman," "as a lesbian Asian," etc., "rather than a rejection of that model of identity politics itself" (2006, 278, 281). Integrative feminist analysis, formed contemporaneously with poststructuralist and postmodern feminist theories, tries to address the fragmentation produced by identity politics' essentialism (Yuval-Davis 2006, 278).

Transversal feminism has been used effectively for coalition-building between different women's groups (see Yuval-Davis 1994, 2002) because in taking a dialogical standpoint people no longer "speak for" their constituencies in an essentializing way but are rather messengers engaged in political dialogue, bringing with them "the reflective knowledge of their own positioning and identity. This is the rooting" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 282). Rooting, the first stage in transversal feminist practice, is when participants do the deep work of thinking about their own identity positions—how they define themselves—and recognize that they cannot speak in an essentializing way "as a…" due to the complexity of intersectionality; rather, they bring partial knowledge from their own complex positions. The second stage in transversal feminist practice is shifting: when participants "put themselves in the situation of those with whom they are in dialogue and who are different from them" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 282). Transversal feminism assumes that people are capable of empathy and that the shifting process involves a careful examination of the "compatible values" that "cut across differences in positionings and identities" (2006, 282). As Yuval-Davis points out, "[t]he struggle against oppression and discrimination might (and mostly does) have a specific categorical focus, but it is never confined just to that category" (2006, 282). For example, when Hill Collins writes about the transversal roots of the success of the Black Lives Matter movement (2017, 1471) and argues for the need to move towards transversal political action in more meaningful ways, she describes how multiple groups came to align themselves with the Black Lives Matter movement.

Hill Collins argues that transversal politics is the necessary but "as yet unrealized future" of political activism (2017, 1471). The challenge, in terms of praxis, is likely that, on the one hand, decades of feminist and other critical evidence has shown that identities like sex, race, and class, are social constructions and therefore "false:" there is no natural, biologically-determined identity to embody. Further, experts have shown that these identities have been, and are, imposed through relations of power and domination

(the extensive and "scientific" Imperial classification and invention of different races in the nineteenth century is an example, see for example Hill Collins 1998; hooks 1989; Lorde 1984; and McClintock 1995). For this reason, postmodern, transversal, post-structuralist, and intersectional feminist theorists argue that equality can be pursued by showing how the false hegemonic binaries of male/female, white/black, straight/gay, etc. crumble under scrutiny.

However, on the other hand, the constructed "falseness" of hegemonic identities exists alongside the material lived effects of those constructions so that decades of evidence in feminist and other critical disciplines also shows that statements like "women are the majority of victims of spousal abuse" and "Indigenous women in Canada are more likely to suffer sexual violence than non-Indigenous women" are not only valid but, in a society of inequalities created by false binaries, they are also politically expedient and necessary (see, for example, Butler 1993, 1-23). Society is not yet in a position where it is simply a matter of recognizing the falseness of either/or identity construction and its historical connections to power relations and domination to dissolve inequality. Identities remain important and this, perhaps, is why Hill Collins (2017) writes that the future possibilities provided by transversal feminism are as yet unmet.

Similarly, Yuval-Davis has pointed out that transversal feminist practice is difficult because both the rooting and shifting stages need to remain fluid, not "straightforward or fixed" (2006, 284). The purpose of rooting in one's identity is "not to imagine oneself just in relation to the social category of the Other but also in other ways through which different kinds of relationships with the partners in the transversal dialogue may be developed" (2006, 284). Hill Collins notes that "the process of shifting must maintain the multiplicity of perspectives both within a group and across groups. This is the difficult challenge, one that recognizes that some coalitions may not be possible" (2017, 1470). Despite the difficulties, however, many moments of transformation in online commenters' political views illustrate transversal feminist praxis in

process. Both Yuval-Davis and Hill Collins argue that intersectionality provides multiple identity meeting points (roots) from which people can connect and shift. For many in Canada, one shared identity point is that of settler.

When commenter rattler wrote that a "creeping acceptance of cultures alien to Canada has reached a saturation point. ... The [immigration] 'welcome' mat is no longer at my door" (2012), for example, Yasmin responded: "I'm sure the First People would agree with you, and would be more than happy to help you pack your goods so that you can move back to Europe. Alien culture indeed" (2012). Yasmin invokes rattler's shared otherness with women who veil as a non-Indigenous settler, suggesting that rattler's perceived right to be in Canada should extend to Muslim Canadians who are, similarly, settlers on someone else's lands. Julia Kristeva's now-germinal work on the construction of foreignness is helpful here: Kristeva (1991) argued that "the foreigner" is formally one who holds a different nationality. In Canada, transnational politics and identity formations produce multiple "foreign" identities (e.g., African American, Italian-Canadian). This holds true even in the discursive construction of First Peoples, who are often represented as "ethnicized" in relation to white settlers to support the myth of white indigeneity and entitlement to the land (see for example Bohaker and Iacovetta 2009). Kristeva argued that postmodern identities allow for multiple points of recognition because we are no longer "fixed" in terms of the relationships between nation-state and self, thus illustrating the link between postmodernism and transversal praxis: when people recognize shared foreignness, outsiders cease to exist because all become outsiders (1991, 96).

Sara Ahmed's (2000) work on "the stranger" similarly notes that the stranger is both "familiar and strange" because of their "proximity." The stranger's very positioning in a shared space is what produces people as strangers in the first place: "[T]he strangers come to be seen as figures (with linguistic and bodily integrity) when they have entered the spaces we call 'home'"

(49). In this sense, all non-Indigenous Canadians have, at one time or another, occupied the position of stranger who becomes incorporated into the home lands (50). In our study, the shared identity location of settler-Outsider was often invoked by commenters to try to create moments of connection across identity locations, a move that reflects transversal praxis' deliberate rooting and shifting.

For example, Nellie_Niqabi shared why she veils and her unhappiness with a society that treats her as a foreigner. Her language suggested she was upset when she wrote that "these brainwashed masses are trying to teach us what our religious requirements are. They are trying to 'liberate' us by passing us snide comments in public and and [sic] trying to tug our veils off. ... The impression that all women who wear the veil are oppressed is completely stereotype" (2012a). Mike_in_Ottawa responded with a transversal shift: he recognized and named their shared settler identity boundary and moved the conversation towards empathy and coalition-building:

> Nellie, I have an issue with your statement "I demand respect because that's what I have been promised when I came here." My family were immigrants to this country as well. They didn't demand respect and Italians were looked down upon for years in this country. We earned respect through hard work and becoming Canadian.... Be patient and the respect and understanding will come. (2012)

In response, Nellie_Niqabi's tone becomes more conversational. She thanks Mike_in_Ottawa for being "understanding" and "open minded," and acknowledges that "respect won't come on demand" but she also continues to name her experience with Islamophobia as different from that of Mike's Italian-Canadian heritage. She writes that anti-veiling attitudes are not "the same thing as another race or another culture. ... For us, we have no reason not to have respect. We do contribute to society. Our face veils don't really make a difference. It isn't that the Niqab is new here [as Mike_in_Ottawa suggested]. It's a whole different thing." She hopes, in her final sentence directed at Mike, "that someday, people might look at Niqabi women as people, and not as symbols of oppression :)" (2012b). Nellie_Niqabi's change in tone from argument to discussion, and her smiley emoticon illustrates a shift towards negotiation and understanding.

Establishing a shared identity location also led to resolution in an argument on *HuffPost*: Janice_Rosen called for a Canadian nation-state that rejects its past racist practices, such as the internment of Japanese-Canadians during World War II, and which instead shows "[f]lexibility and understanding and a willingness to extend this understanding to cultural differences" (2012). In response, AlisonCarnie, who had initially posted "[t]his is Canada ... adapt or go home" (2012a), writes "I was wrong and you are right ... you explained it brilliantly." AlisonCarnie went on to disclose: "I dated a man in the 1970s in Toronto whose parents were born in Vancouver and were of Japanese descent ... they were in an internment camp during WWII ... not one of Canada's proudest moments" (2012b). AlisonCarnie's turn to her past experience, directly after an admittance of wrong-thinking, illustrates that her attitudinal shift was related to her own close personal relationship with someone who had experienced the negative effects of being treated as an outsider. One aspect of her identity (former girlfriend of Japanese Canadian man) allowed her to find a common link and move to empathy and transformation.

Adding to Kristeva's theories about shared outsider status, a number of theorists suggest that building interpersonal connections can move people to better understand others' experiences, part of the rooting process in transversal politics. In her exploration of the tensions between white and racialized women's coalition building, María Lugones (1983) notes:

> [T]he only motive that makes sense to me for your [privileged women] joining us ... is the motive of friendship. ... I see the "out of friendship" as the only sensical motivation for this ... because the task at hand for you is one of extraordinary difficulty. ... I do not think

that you have any obligation to understand us. You do not have an obligation to abandon your imperialism, your universal claims, you reduction of us to your selves. (576)

Both Lugones and Elizabeth Spelman, with whom she writes, articulate the importance of dialogue that undoes insider/outsider binaries:

At first sight it may appear that the insider/outsider distinction disappears in the dialogue, but it is important to notice that all that happens is that we are now both outsider and insider with respect to each other. The dialogue puts us both in position to give a better account of each other's and our own experience. (1983, 577)

Self-interest or a sense of obligation does not engage members of a dominant group in others' struggles long-term. Personal connection, "the motive of friendship," is "both the only appropriate and understandable motive for" the dominant group, they argue: "[Y]ou may be moved by friendship to undergo the very difficult task of understanding the text of our cultures by understanding our lives.… This learning calls for circumspection, for questioning of yourselves and your roles in your own culture" (1983, 581), which is the process of rooting, and of recognizing the many ways that we, individually, might define ourselves.

Although identity-markers are often cited in feminist intersectional scholarship as race, gender, class, ability, age, etc., they can and do encompass a number of ways that individuals identify themselves, including more mundane connections such as links to popular culture. One such example in our dataset illustrated that, in rooting, there are many ways to make connections and shift. When Liz_Wilson_2 wondered "what is more important in this situation, to prosecute the men that have assaulted her—giving justice and access to legal recourse for Islamic women in Canada or to force her to appear unveiled" (2012a), Gerry K. initially responded:

If they allow this then it sets a precedent. Should we let religious beliefs push back Cana-

dian law? What's next … Jedi was recently accredited as a recognized religion, what if they say they can't testify without light sabres on the stand, or their Yoda puppets? Where is the line drawn? (2012a)

Instead of a counter-attack, Liz_Wilson_2 writes: "How did you know I had a light saber and a puppet :o)" (2012b). She then again shares her concern "that this is also a way of intimidating this particular woman and could result in her choosing not to testify or to be so uncomfortable that her testimony is affected" (2012b). Commenter Dipl added in response to Gerry K.: "[I]f Yoda you wish on your legal team, sit he must at the counsel table" (2012), mimicking Yoda's speech syntax. The identity marker shared by these commenters is that of Star Wars fan: all three commenters know enough about the Star Wars franchise, and its relation to cultural movements like the Jedi religion in the UK, to make playful gestures towards it. Rooting out this shared identity marker produced a shift in Gerry K.'s tone and view: "I agree, and I really hope this is not an intimidation tactic" (2012b). This example points to the fluidity Yuval-Davis argues is required when rooting to find a shared point of contact with those positioned in opposition. If rooting produces identity considerations that are embedded only in Black/White, straight/gay, man/woman, young/old, etc., then it is still simply "recognizing the self via the relationship with the significant Other," whereas "the whole point of transversal politics is to transcend the binary divisions of those who are in different positionings in the dialogue" (Yuval-Davis 2006, 284). The Jedi-based humour used by the Star Wars fans in this particular example illustrates that rooting and shifting can be playfully serious work.

The work of Kristeva, Spelman and Lugones, Ahmed, and transversal feminism moves away from the identity-based essentialism that leads to political infighting and towards adopting dialogic standpoint bridge building between groups and individuals. This work explains why the transformations that happened during the online discussions in our dataset are examples

of transversal praxis in practice and effect, if not intent. Transversal feminist theorists have heralded the efficacy of "dialogic" consciousness-raising and anti-oppressive work "as a means of creating difference- and diversity-sensitive feminist solidarity across national and regional borders" (Lykke 2004, 75; see also Stoetzler and Yuval-Davis 2002, 315-35; Yuval-Davis 1997; Yuval-Davis and Stoetzler 2002). That work was apparent in our dataset when some commenters made connections between their own lives and the lives of others, whether those connections were made consciously or not.

Conclusion: Postmodern and Transversal Theory and Conflict Resolution

Feminist praxis is conceived of as a deliberate process, both in research and in personal development (see Hesse-Biber 2012). Sumi Cho, Kimberlé Crenshaw, and Leslie McCall, for example, outline three approaches to achieve intersectional feminist praxis. Elizabeth Evans notes that making the "transition from theory to practice" is a process of "application" (2016, 68). Elizabeth Sharp et al. (2017) recount how their work translates "scholarship to action" (76) because they were intentionally "guided by feminist praxis" to move from "frustration and anger into action" (80). Similarly, Katherine Allen (2000), and Lee Ann De Reus, April Few, and Libby Balter Blume (2005) note that praxis is the process of putting theory into action. Nancy Naples, in her reflections on the transformation of political theory into everyday politics, notes that "feminist praxis incorporates a commitment to self-reflexivity" that is necessary to transform experience into knowledge (2013, 659-661). While feminist praxis does rely on reflexive and conscious transformation, which could explain why, given the tenacity of identity politics, Hill Collins (2017) noted that transversal feminist praxis is not yet met, we found evidence in our dataset that people can and do transform their everyday politics through the processes of rooting and shifting identified by transversal feminism, even if they are not consciously doing so.

These moments would not be possible without the permeability of postmodern identity positions. In her work, connecting Donna Haraway's postmodernism to transversal theory, Michelle Bastian points out that postmodern subjects are better able to reach points of empathy and respect than the fixed subject of modernity; that is, postmodern subjects are better able to engage in transversal praxis. Bastian draws attention to Haraway's argument that identity "is always constructed and stitched together imperfectly and *therefore* able to join with another, to see together without claiming the other" (qtd. in Bastian 2006, 1040). The everyday politics of identity work that took place when discussants recognized that their own identities were permeable and which allowed them to "join with another, to see together" diversely and move towards understanding, empathy, and resolution are examples of transversal praxis in action (also see Pryse 2000, 108-9). These transformations led discussants to "dismantl[e] the systems that maintain group antagonisms" (Bastian 2006, 1040), like the Islamophobia that was embedded in, and which surrounded, the *R. v. N.S.* decision.

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Gender, Victimization, and Commercial Sex: A Comparative Study

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Abstract: This article critically examines and compares adult male and female experiences selling sex in Canada's off-street sex industry. Findings indicate that gender disparities exist when it comes to the work of selling sex: male providers are better insulated from violence and exploitation because of their gender, while female sex workers are forced to navigate multiple layers of oppression to assure safer working conditions. Despite these differences, this data suggests that prioritizing overarching labour issues, instead of gendered experiences working in commercial sex, can function to increase all sex workers' safety and access to justice.

Keywords: Sex work, gender, victimization, access to justice, labour rights

Introduction

Although the commercial sex industry has been subject to academic research for decades, few studies have employed overtly inclusive approaches. Until recently, studies typically focused on women's experiences selling sexual services—most often from the street—with some smaller projects including those who identified as male and sold sex, and even fewer that sought the experiences of transgender, non-binary, gender queer, or two-spirit sex workers. There are now several studies that include all gender identities and various forms of sex work (Benoit et al. 2014; Jeffrey and MacDonald 2006; Jenkins 2009; O'Doherty 2015; Sanders et al. 2018), and others that highlight the experiences of specific groups of workers, like racialized workers (Jones 2015; Lam 2018; Raguparan 2017). While there are ideological and political reasons for maintaining a narrow focus on women's experiences selling sex, operating from a more inclusive framework can help to better inform policy. To improve our understanding of how gender, criminality, and marginalization intersect, we need to know more about the degree to which the experience of selling sex is gendered, and which aspects of the work are comparable across genders.

The minimal attention in academic literature paid to the specific ways that gender impacts the experience of selling sex is particularly alarming when we consider how related laws and law enforcement reflect extremely gendered assumptions about the sex industry. For example, Canada is one of several countries to adopt a form of criminalization that is mostly in line with neo-prohibitionist targeting of the demand (clients) and management (third-parties) of sex work. However, those Canadians who provide sexual services remain directly criminalized under the communica-

tion provision, and indirectly criminalized because their clients and those who assist them to do the work are targeted for criminalization. These latter provisions are particularly concerning given that social science evidence overwhelmingly demonstrates the harsh and negative impacts of criminalization (Maher, Pickering, and Gerard 2012; O'Doherty 2015; Pitcher 2015). Indeed, the Supreme Court of Canada determined that criminalization, in its direct and indirect forms, increased sex workers' vulnerability to victimization (*Canada (AG) v Bedford*, 2013 SCC 72). Unfortunately, and as critical legal scholars have been asserting for decades, law is political. The politicization of law is glaringly apparent in the legislation enacted after the *Bedford* decision: Canada now has one of the most expansive forms of criminalization in the world, demonstrating a flawed understanding of how criminalization contributes to victimization and marginalization.

The Canadian situation mirrors the international trend to enact asymmetrical criminalization on the assumption that sex work reflects deeply gendered, and misogynistic, social experiences. However, advocates have been basing these assertions on women's experiences alone, resulting in policy documents outlining laws that neglect to mention the existence of transgender or male sex workers (MSWs), in spite of the fact that they are estimated to comprise roughly 20-25 percent of any sex industry (Benoit et al 2014; Sanders et al. 2018). Further, the social science data that underlies asymmetrical criminalization tends to focus on women in the most marginalized circumstances (street-based workers), even though they comprise 5-20 percent of any sex industry (Pivot Legal Society 2006). These limitations in and of themselves are not terribly problematic as these samples reflect individuals who typically endure intersections of oppression such as racial prejudice, precarious housing and extreme poverty, addiction, mental health issues, and ongoing impacts of colonization (Kurtz et al. 2004; Lowman 2000; Pivot Legal Society 2006; Ross 2010; van der Meulen, Yee, and Durisin 2010). However, some academics continue to represent small samples of women selling sex

in survival-type circumstances as if they were the only experiences for people who sell sex. Troublingly, this practice has been taken up by some advocates and politicians, and has resulted in unrepresentative, ill-informed policies.

Social science research indicates that female sex workers (FSWs) experience higher rates of violence than MSWs experience (Benoit et al. 2014; O'Doherty 2015; Sanders et al. 2018; Walby 2012). However, other groups of sex workers also face harsh levels of victimization: transgender and non-binary sex workers often report victimization due in part to selling sex, but also due to their gender or gender presentation (Fletcher 2013; Lyons et al. 2017). Further, there are many women who sell sex and do not experience violence in their work (Benoit et al. 2014; Jenkins 2009; O'Doherty 2007; Sanders et al. 2018) and men who experience victimization related to selling sex (McIntyre 2005). Victimization rates ought to be considered in light of general inequality in society; women continue to face violence in their personal and sexual relationships at higher rates than do men—regardless of a commercial element in the transaction. Many other industries also feature high levels of exploitation and victimization for female labourers—but also of male or transgender labourers. While gender explains a degree of victimization, other socio-political factors such as class, race, and health may increase or decrease vulnerability, depending on the individual context.

When research related to commercial sex operates from a gender-inclusive perspective, new knowledge emerges that demonstrates less of a gender-based experience than previously represented in academic works. The conversation shifts away from a sole focus on the idea of females as vulnerable and in need of protection and allows exploration of the factors that can insulate workers from violence. Few studies have explored how the experience of selling sex, beyond victimization rates, is gendered. While there are studies representing men's experiences selling sex (Allman, 1999; Dorais 2005; Mariño, Minichiello, and Disogra 2004; Minichiello, Scott, and Callander 2013;

MacPhail, Scott, and Minichiello 2015; Parsons, Koken, and Bimbi 2007; Pendleton and Stevenson 2016; Smith 2012; Smith, Grov, and Seal 2008; Walby 2012), they remain largely absent from general discourse and policy documents.

The literature surrounding MSWs often reflects different concerns than does the literature on FSW. Historically, academics have focused predominantly on the sexuality and sexual practices of the MSW and his capacity to spread communicable diseases (Bimbi 2007; Mariño, Minichiello, and Disogra 2004; Pendleton and Stevenson 2016). There is much to be gained from redirecting MSW discourse away from these foci and toward issues that more directly affect their work as sex workers, like regulatory frameworks and legal provisions (Minichiello, Scott, and Callander 2013; Pitcher and Wijers 2014). Past studies have rarely included male perspectives from a sex-work-as-work perspective, which means presumptions that men engage in sex work for pleasure, or sexual exploration, dominate the literature. This is troublesome since male providers experience similar stigma to that of female providers (Kumar et al. 2017), which can potentially lead to isolation (Pitcher and Wijers 2014), forced displacement (MacPhail, Scott, and Minichiello 2015; Ross 2010), police victimization (Gratl 2012), and increased vulnerability to violence (Lewis et al. 2005).

The sex industry encompasses individuals with diverse personal characteristics, motivations, and experiences; policies governing it ought to be evidence-based and reflective of this diversity. Since the emergence of the sex worker rights movement in the 1970s, sex workers and allies have been organizing and advocating to highlight sex work labour issues (Beer 2018). They continue to assert that criminalization frameworks perpetuate harm and prevent the implementation of safer working conditions (Krüsi et al. 2014; Landsberg et al. 2017; Levy and Jakobsson 2014; Sanders et al. 2018). While the evidence is clear, it reflects primarily the experiences of FSWs. This has facilitated the use of policies to affirm certain moral and ideological conceptions of fe-

male vulnerability and a sustained drive to "protect" female sexual chastity. When men, transgender, two-spirit, and other non-binary folks are included in policy discussions, protectionist discourse falls away and focus can be redirected towards ameliorating working conditions for all sex workers. In this article, we employ a gender-inclusive lens to unpack how socio-political positioning influences experiences of criminalization and victimization.

Methods

This article reports data collected as part of O'Doherty's (2015) collaboratively designed doctoral study investigating the experience of selling sex in Canada's off-street sex industry. Employing participant-driven action research methods, in line with current ethical practices (Bowen and O'Doherty 2014), the collaboration team (comprised of eight sex workers from across Canada) sampled 109 adult sex workers via an anonymous online survey and conducted 42 in-depth interviews in 2012 using purposive sampling. Participants were recruited using existing contact networks, publicly available lists of sex workers, and advertisements in online forums. The survey and interviews focused on victimization (defined as all forms of harm, in addition to inter-personal physical violence like theft or harassment) from clients, third-parties, the state, and society more generally, as well as labour dimensions of sex industry work. In line with the Academy of Criminal Justice Sciences' ethics code, no limits were placed on the guarantee of confidentiality to participants. While the online questionnaire was anonymous, we use pseudonyms in all reporting to ensure interview participants remain un-identifiable.

This article also reports on Waters' (2018) related honours thesis findings which compared a subset of 11 male interview participants within O'Doherty's full sample with the other interview participants (n=31), as well as to the other male (n=12), female (n=91), and transgender (n=4) survey participants, to enable a more gender-inclusive understanding of sex industry work. Both projects received ethics approval through Simon Fraser University.

The participants worked in all segments of commercial sex, with many having experienced several forms of sex work. Their ages at the time of participation ranged from early 20s to late 60s. While the larger total sample included racialized sex workers, the sample of male participants was primarily white, with only one man identifying as non-white. Two transgender women and one gender queer woman participated in the project. However, these participants each indicated that their identities were most accurately framed as "women" for comparative reporting practices. Thus, this analysis is regrettably limited to a gender dichotomy. In terms of sexuality, the larger sample demonstrated similar diversity patterns as other recent works (Jenkins 2009; Sanders et al. 2018) with a large minority identifying as heterosexual (42.6%), and the remainder of the participants identifying as bi-sexual, gay, lesbian, or queer. The male subset differed slightly: the majority identified as gay, with 30% of the total sample of survey and interview participants identifying as bisexual or as situationally open: hetero-flexible or "straight with a curve."

The following key findings challenge our current understanding of commercial sex generally and reveal distinctive characteristics of the male experience specifically. By comparing the data from the men to the overall sample, we provide a preliminary comparison of some male and female sex work experiences. We structure this report around the dominant themes present in the interview segment of the research: violence and victimization, occupational health and safety, and regulatory frameworks and their impacts on sex workers. Ultimately, this data demonstrates that the experience of selling sex reflects the degree to which one's socio-political identity produces relative advantage or disadvantage in different social contexts.

Violence and Victimization

Rates of Victimization
The overwhelming majority of men interviewed indicated that they felt safe from victimization and violence. Of the 11 interview participants, one experienced a violent encounter, and that encounter did not occur during the course of his sex work. Consequently, the mere association of male sex work and violence seemed ludicrous to some, as Sean expressed: "How can providing an intimate, pleasurable experience which in many cases can by luminous, transcendent, a sacrament—how can that be … violence?"

Some of these participants described client interactions wherein they felt uncomfortable, yet when compared to the larger sample of sex worker experiences in the survey, these data confirm that male experiences of violence are markedly lower than those of FSWs. Whereas 33.7% of female survey respondents reported experiences of inter-personal violence, 25.0% of the men surveyed (3 out of 12) encountered violence during the course of their work in the sex industry (O'Doherty 2015, 159). These findings are consistent with related research: Minichiello et al. (1999) found that violence was an infrequent exception for MSWs, while Mariño, Minichiello and Disogra (2004) found that out of 254 MSW encounters, only 1.5% involved some form of violence.

While men experience low violence rates, like women, they face other forms of non-violent victimization (harassment, pressure to participate in sexual activities or provide unprotected sexual services, theft). However, FSWs continue to experience higher rates of both violent and non-violent victimization during the course of their work (O'Doherty 2015; Sanders et al. 2018). Walby (2012) hypothesizes that men face less victimization than females because MSW clients are typically other men. This hypothesis falls in line with the gendered nature of victimization at a societal level, wherein female victimization is seen as being an expression of power—something that is not generally present in interactions involving male providers (Bungay et al. 2012, 263).

When participants in our study were asked about their clients and their propensity for violence, there was some disparity according to gender. The female participants were quick to point out the various risk-mitigating activities they built into their work to prevent victimization, whereas the male participants were somewhat dismissive of any risk of violence from their clients, particularly their female clients. On the contrary, these participants—like sex workers in other studies (Jenkins 2009 and Redwood 2013)—asserted that their clients were respectful and that most clients would not dream of victimizing providers. In an earlier study, off-street FSWs likewise explained that client relations are generally very positive, with many participants expressing care for their clients and rejecting the view that clients are predators (O'Doherty 2007). The participants in this study explained that while clients frequently tried to negotiate prices or request specific sexual activities that the worker did not generally provide, workers most often responded by refusing to negotiate price, offering alternative services, or rejecting the client outright. In this regard, women spoke more assertively than did men. These male participants, having smaller pools of clients and often working part-time, expressed more openness to negotiation and "exploration." This confirms the importance of context in maintaining safety: in some situations, women providers felt relatively more power to refuse to negotiate with clients than did male providers.

In terms of third-parties, most of the male participants in our study worked independently, whereas women often spoke of working in cooperative environments, for agents, or in other managed environments. The independent workers reported the lowest rates of victimization and violence, again demonstrating the importance of situational privilege associated with both structure and context. Victimization can occur in any context, but sex workers' power to control the parameters of client interactions positively affects their safety, regardless of gender. Where the worker feels able to decline a client, especially when the worker feels that a manager or other person is present and able to support

the worker, victimization is reduced (Bruckert and Law 2013; O'Doherty 2011).

These findings demonstrate that general experiences within the sex industry stand in contrast to claims made in government policy regarding the omnipresence of violence and victimization. The rates of victimization reported in this study support the notion that sex work is not inherently violent, nor is it necessarily an experience of sexual coercion, pimping, or trafficking. Therefore, victimization does not justify criminalization frameworks for the purposes of protection in this highly gendered and essentialist manner. Not only can standard criminal laws be used if violence occurs, criminalization impedes safer labour conditions by disallowing third-parties, who can play a crucial role in minimizing the risk of encountering occupational hazards (Anderson et al. 2015; Bruckert and Law 2013; Pitcher and Wijers 2014; Shaver, Lewis, and Maticka-Tyndale 2011).

Mitigating Risk
Many participants shared safety strategies they practiced to mitigate occupational hazards during the course of their work. Much like Corriveau and Greco (2014) found, participants reported employing approaches such as having tracking functions enabled on cell phones, telling others of a location, communicating with clients prior to meeting-up, establishing physical and psychological boundaries, and maintaining sobriety to minimize the risk of encountering victimization. Despite the comprehensiveness of these strategies, the male interview participants rarely expressed physical safety as a primary concern. Tony's response, "safety—I've never had a concern," reflects the responses typically provided by men in our study.

For FSWs, risk management strategies occupy a more central role. The women in the larger sample identified physical safety as being one of their top concerns, devoting considerable time to listing specific safety-enhancing strategies in their responses. While the women identified similar risk management strategies as did the MSWs, they also reported using more rigorous safety strategies to ensure their physical safety,

such as requiring references, screening clients using bad date sheets, making safety calls, carrying pepper spray, and taking self-defence classes.

The differential emphasis placed on physical safety strategies relates to sex workers' abilities to respond to violence and non-violent victimization. Most participants explained that if they felt uncomfortable or unsafe in a situation, they simply reaffirmed their boundaries or otherwise asserted control over the encounter. If that did not ease their apprehension, they simply left. Some participants went on to explain that they would not hesitate to phone the police in the event of an incident. However, the reality of disclosing one's sex work status to police and the fear of facing legal repercussion, or even judgment from police, combined with a lack of faith in the Canadian legal system's ability to deal with their victimization, served as a barrier to reporting actual incidents of victimization. Privilege is one factor here, as Sean explains the different responses from police to victimization faced by racialized sex workers in particular: "I'm the sort of person (a white, cisgender male) who could create a real fucking stink if they didn't do something about it. ... Because of my privilege, I could probably report. But not everyone has access to justice."

Gender was not a primary differentiating factor in reporting practices, either. MSWs, who typically did not experience violence, remained concerned about police reactions to their sex work. Some men felt that they would be treated poorly because they were gay or because society fails to respond adequately to male victimization. As Steve explains, "unless I was physically gushing blood and the ambulance came and the police came, I really can't see them caring." Both male and female providers referred to a sustained idea among sex workers that police believe violence is merely part of the sex industry. Indeed, asymmetrical criminalization is based on this idea—that violence is inherent to sex work—making it harder for sex workers to access justice when violence does occur.

Like the female participants of the larger sample, the male interviewees highlighted the importance of workplace training and information-sharing to ensure workplace safety. As with any form of labour, training regarding safe workplace practices decreases the risk of workplace injuries. In the case of sex work, third-parties are criminalized for providing such information, leaving sex workers to implement safety strategies on a client-to-client basis without formal training. Authors such as Abel et al. (2009), Krüsi et al. (2014), and Pivot Legal Society (2006) point out the dangers workers face when safety strategies are constrained. Participants in the current study, echoing sex workers demands for decades (Beer 2018), advance that decriminalization would permit the extension of labour rights and facilitate the improvement of safe working conditions through workplace training and operations standards. As John explains:

I can't understand why it would be associated with criminal activity. I simply don't understand and I am involved in it.… It would be better to have environments where the transactions can take place and where they aren't regarded as dirty, subterranean and shameful.

Occupational Health and Safety

Stigma

I think if [sex work] was not taboo, I wouldn't have a problem with everybody knowing. But it is. Sex is a taboo subject itself—getting paid for sex just ups the ante. (Jared)

While stigma is felt differentially, reflecting levels of social privilege or oppression associated with one's socio-political identity, all sex workers deal with stigma (Bruckert and Hannem 2013; Bowen and Bungay 2016; Day 2007). Female participants characterized stigma as being one of the worst occupational hazards of their work. Men, too, felt stigma associated with selling sex, and gay men felt doubly stigmatized for being gay and providing services to other men. Some participants asserted that judgments about sex work as criminal behaviour jeopardized safe workspaces. If a landlord learns sex work is

occurring on premises of a rented space, the landlord is considered to be materially benefitting from sex work, which is a criminal offence in Canada. Sean reported being evicted from a workspace on precisely this basis.

FSWs in general may experience worse consequences resulting from stigma than do MSWs. Greater visibility of female street-based sex work contributes to increased police presence and therefore increased negative encounters with police (Ross 2010; Bruckert and Hannem 2013; Shaver 2005). Justified by their concern for the exploitation of women, heightened police attention has resulted in a greater likelihood that police will target FSWs for intervention (Jeffrey and MacDonald 2006). Sex work involvement can, and continues to be, used against sex workers in civil proceedings as a demonstration of poor judgment and a lack of fitness for parenting (O'Doherty 2015; Ross 2010).

Stigma prevents sex workers from experiencing the same civic and social rights afforded to other members of society (Bruckert and Hannem 2013). This exclusion from society prevents all sex workers from being able to practice their work in ways that maximize their occupational safety. For instance, they may be less likely to seek out medical attention and report victimization for fear of facing discrimination by police and health practitioners because of their involvement in the sex industry. In our interviews, Dave pointed out that decriminalization alone would not eliminate stigma just as decriminalization did not eliminate homophobia. However, it would allow sex work to be legitimate, thereby increasing sex workers' ability to practice sex work safely.

Isolation and its Effects on Health

Isolation is another occupational hazard of sex work, particularly independent sex work. The secretive and stigmatized nature of the work makes many sex workers fear being "outed" by family or friends (Bowen 2015), forcing them to lead isolating "double lives." The job itself can leave sex workers feeling emotionally and physically drained by the time they return home, creating distance in personal lives. Damien indicated that he was very careful about when and to whom he disclosed his sex work, "because then they can't see the rest of me." All participants, regardless of gender, reported experiencing strained personal relationships with partners and in some cases, their families.

Isolation may be a greater factor for MSWs. Several of the male participants commented to the effect that they did not have the same support networks as female providers, even voicing uncertainty about whether organizations would provide services to male providers. Further, FSWs have more opportunity to work with other sex workers and third parties, which can help to mitigate the effects of isolation. Of course, working with others is criminalized in Canada and opens sex workers up to increased possibility of law enforcement action.

Health Outcomes

In terms of physical health, MSWs and FSWs identified sexually transmitted infections as being a serious occupational health hazard. Most participants stressed the importance of safe sex practices, yet some explained that contracting an STI was simply a part of the job. Research has consistently determined that sex workers take safe sex practices seriously (McCarthy, Benoit, and Jansson 2014; Parent and Bruckert 2013; Parsons, Koken, and Bimbi 2007; Walby 2012). However, Atchison and Burnett (2016) add that safe sex practices are dictated by a multitude of factors like venue, clients' relationships, and choices related to substance abuse. Since FSWs are more likely to work in street-based settings, Weitzer (2009) concludes that they have a harder time mitigating risky behaviours because there is a higher prevalence of drug use, coercion, and violence. Further, some providers may be at higher risk of engaging in unsafe sexual practices due to rushed negotiations that result from fear of police (Pivot Legal Society 2006).

Regarding other health outcomes, sex work is emotional labour. Some participants, like Nico, attributed

feelings of depression to the stigma and isolation that permeates the sex industry. He explains:

> I do have some depression around escorting. … My boyfriend, I was with him for a year and a half. He never told me to stop [working] … but I knew at the end of the relationship, this [being an escort] was the issue.

Sex workers create physical, social, and psychological boundaries to keep their work and personal lives separate (Smith, Grov, and Seal 2008); maintaining these boundaries can be mentally draining and isolating. FSWs in general face higher levels of stress due to fear of police intervention and prosecution. While some of the male participants mentioned their fear of having their sex worker identity exposed, this was not as prominent a concern for the men since they rarely feared police prosecution. Thus, there may be a gendered difference in the severity of emotional, physical, and psychological consequences of sex work under criminalized regulation.

Regulatory Approaches

Understanding of Criminal Laws and their Effects
The male interview participants reported having mostly indifferent relationships with the law and law enforcement. Many participants expressed that police were more interested in targeting female providers, which may explain why a majority had never encountered law enforcement and felt minimal concern about criminalization. Consequently, the male subset of the larger sample was better able to perform their work without fear of police persecution, affording them increased control over their work environments. They could work from home and communicate with clients more openly, thereby reducing the number of occupational hazards they encounter.

In contrast, the female participants expressed that sex work laws greatly impacted their work. For instance, heightened efforts to rescue them from the industry can generally make FSWs more hesitant to work out of their homes, forcing them to navigate unsafe working conditions like poorly lit, less-populated

areas to find clients or outcall locations—environments that increase the risk of violent victimization (Pivot Legal Society 2006).

Some participants understood this differential enforcement of the law as speaking to the societal construction of gender difference that is replicated in commercial sex. Specifically, when societies associate gender with vulnerability—for example portraying women as inherently vulnerable to victimization and exploitation—protectionist policies emerge. The creation of such policies has led some participants, like Marco, to argue that the male and female industries should be subject to different laws: "[T]hey are entirely different sex industries. They are entirely different professions, [and] trying to make laws that think of both; it's wrong. It's making mistakes again and again and again."

In our survey, gender did not affect the levels of fear reported when sex workers crossed international borders. All providers reported feeling very anxious when crossing the Canadian/United States border due to fear that the border guard would inquire about their work and uncover their involvement in the sex industry. To navigate those situations, participants reported that they described their work in vague terms and prepared answers ahead of time to help ease their apprehension.

While all participants expressed limited knowledge of the specific laws surrounding the Canadian sex industry, the female participants more often knew general information, with a few participants having strong knowledge of the law. In contrast, and similar to Corriveau and Greco's (2014) findings, the male participants displayed limited, if any, knowledge of current laws, or even whether their work was legal. This ability to work without knowing current legal frameworks speaks to advantages of being male and selling sex: there is less societal attention and differential law enforcement. In this way, their gender insulates men from police surveillance, thereby shaping their experiences.

Approaching Sex Work as Work

All participants expressed views of their work as labour, and as a form of labour that extended beyond the provision of sexual services. Many described their work as similar to the work of therapists, entertainers, or caregivers, underscoring the healing, caring, and therapeutic benefits that their clients receive. John, described the importance of his work:

> The men I see have a chance to experience something that, for whatever reason, they have chosen to repress. It could be that they're afraid to acknowledge themselves or represent themselves as gay because of fears at work or family. They get one moment, whether it's an hour, three hours, a weekend, to experience what it might be like to live the life they wish they could live.

Examining the intricacies of the industry in terms of its labour components demonstrates that sex workers generally approach their work as they would any other business venture. Much like other self-employed business owners, participants discussed having to track expenses, advertise their services, market themselves, and behave in a professional manner to succeed. While some minor gender differences may exist, our data reveals that prioritizing overarching labour issues instead of gendered experiences working in the sex industry can function to increase worker safety.

Conclusion

The overwhelming majority of participants in this study expressed that sex work ought to be recognized as work, and that any form of criminalization impedes access to justice and human and labour rights. The majority of male and female participants did not experience violence from clients, and when they experienced victimization, it most often manifested in the form of harassment. Safety-enhancing strategies used by more privileged sex workers safeguard their occupational health and contribute to lower rates of violence. However, female participants clearly prioritize these efforts at a higher level than do the male participants, indicating a clear gender disparity regarding fear of violence.

Unsurprisingly, a key difference between the gender groups is real and perceived vulnerability to violence and victimization. While neither group faced high rates of violence, female providers adopt more comprehensive risk management tools and report greater interaction with police. MSWs felt safer carrying out their work than FSWs did, which afforded them less stress and fear in relation to their work. These results clearly indicate that gender insulated men from some of the victimization experienced by women. However, victimization rates vary based on other social and contextual factors too, demonstrating that rather than commercial sex itself being a source of victimization, the industry replicates victimization rates seen across all forms of labour. In this regard, the sex industry is no different from other industries in terms of the impacts of intersecting levels of oppression.

This data highlights how gender privilege functions to insulate men from some forms of interpersonal violence, but they also show the differential application of the law to the male and female commercial sex industries. Responses of the male participants indicate an entitlement to delineating the parameters of their sexual activities, whether personal or professional. These are privileges that women have to fight for and defend. Many other layers of oppression and disadvantage function in similar ways to insulate some from—and expose others to—harsher working conditions, exploitation, and violence.

If policy-makers wish to improve sex workers' access to justice, they need to incorporate knowledge about how other layers of oppression, such as racism, classism, ableism, or heterosexism impact the job of sex work, law enforcement, and related victimization rates. The effects of oppression are amplified because the commercial sex industry is subject to criminal laws and its labourers do not have recourse under labour or human rights laws. Thus, the criminalization of the sex industry has differential impacts on the safety and occupational health of male and female sex workers. If nations are looking to protect individuals from violence and exploitation, they must consider how laws and law enforcement contribute to victimization and

vulnerability among multiple and intersecting layers of oppression. If access to justice for the most advantaged of sex workers remains elusive, where does that leave those who live with less privilege?

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The Impossibility of a Future in the Absence of a Past: Drifting in the In-Between

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Abstract: In this collaborative paper, we bring the work of Billy-Ray Belcourt, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, Dionne Brand, and M. NourbeSe Philip into conversation in order to consider the concept of drift. Drawing on drift as both metaphor and methodology, we argue that drifting is not aimless or passive, as dictionary definitions suggest; rather, as a form of refusal, to follow the work of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014a, 2014b), it can be understood as resistance to colonial gestures of capture and containment. Inherently mobile, drift revels in inadvertent assemblages and volatile juxtapositions that reveal the artifice of the worlds we currently inhabit, in the process making new worlds possible. In this way, we suggest that drift is necessarily decolonial, in that it is premised on different ways of interacting among human, non-human, and more-than-human. Working through themes of intimacy, love, origins, dirt, and accountings, we argue that drift can be more productively read as an agential mode of kinning, making, and thinking together.

Keywords: drift, intimacy, decoloniality, kinning, refusal

What might it mean to drift?

There is something ungraspable about drifting, something impossible. According to the *Oxford English Dictionary Online*, to drift is to meander, to go wherever the forces take you. It is to move without apparent intentionality, to be carried, swept, borne. In language, the dictionary tells us, to drift is to be rendered in passive voice.

To drift is to exist in a state of geographic, temporal, and psychic suspension, to exist in a state of time- and place-lessness; adrift, we are free of firm coordinates. Drifting, in this way, lacks direction; instead, drifters wander, destination uncertain. Drift, then, appears to lack agency; apparently purposeless, it aspires to aimlessness. To drift, it seems, is to leave the heavy lifting to others, to go with the flow. In this way, drift would appear to have no future; eternally unfinished, it is impossible, it cannot be realized. Nor, however, does drifting have a past: unmappable and endlessly mobile, drift lacks origins. Where, indeed, could drift begin?

In this collaborative paper, we offer an alternative reading of drift as a way towards understanding the impossibility of a future in the absence of a past, the unruliness of a geography that will not be fixed, and the complexities of a wounded world that cannot be mapped. Drawing on drift as both metaphor and methodology, we argue that drifting is not aimless or passive, as dictionary definitions suggest; rather, as a form of refusal, to follow the work of Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang (2014a, 2014b), it can be understood as resistance to colonial gestures of capture and containment. Taken literally, drift is about unsettling: to drift is to *resist* settling. Inherently mobile, drift revels in inadvertent assemblages and volatile juxtapositions that reveal the artifice of the worlds we currently inhabit, in the process making new worlds possible. In this way, we suggest that drift is necessarily decolonial, in that it is premised on different ways of interacting among human, non-human, and more-than-human. Working through themes of intimacy, love, origins, dirt, and accountings, we argue

that drift can be more productively read as an agential mode of kinning, making, and thinking together.

Our theorizing here is informed by feminist, queer, Indigenous, and Black thought, and draws inspiration from the literary work of four Indigenous and Black writers and thinkers living and working in/on/with Turtle Island: Billy-Ray Belcourt, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, M. NourbeSe Philip, and Dionne Brand. Belcourt's 2017 Griffin-prize-winning collection of poems, *This Wound is a World*, digs deep into the politics of grief, desire, trauma, sex, queerness, and indigeneity under, in, and beyond settler colonialism. Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's two books of short stories and songs, *Islands of Decolonial Love* and *This Accident of Being Lost*, explore the possibility of decolonial love, which she understands as "not … just an emotion, but a practice of respect, reciprocity, consent and humility" (qtd. in Dey and Walker 2018, 2). Dionne Brand's award-winning *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, meanwhile, is a memoir that takes up the afterlives of slavery, longings for origins, and the impossibility of return. M. NourbeSe Philip's 2008 poetic meditation *Zong!*, finally, interrogates and undoes the 1781 massacre aboard the slave ship the *Zong*, which saw between 132 and 150 enslaved Africans thrown overboard for insurance purposes.

All of these works tangle with the embodied and bodily legacies of colonialism and imperialism, seeking new ways to deal with violence, trauma, and erasure. In the process, all challenge us to think differently about intimacy, love, violence, and desire. These texts offer us insights into toxic conditions, but also, through the metaphor of drift, into possible means of resistance.

In bringing these thinkers and writers together, we respond to the call put forward by Zainab Amadahy and Bonita Lawrence to engage in "ongoing dialogue, between Black peoples and Native people in Canada, about relationships to this land, as Indigenous peoples and those who have experienced diaspora and settlement here" (2009, 105). The alliances that

might emerge from a conversation among these texts are not necessarily neat and tidy. As Amadahy and Lawrence observe, the relationship between Black and Indigenous peoples in this place called Canada is thorny and complex. While both communities share experiences of racialization and marginalization, they are positioned very differently within the context of the nation-state. This can result in struggles for social justice that are sometimes antithetical to one another.

Thus, while we might read each thinker through the metaphor of drift broadly speaking, their individual driftings are unique, shaped by specific histories, violences, desires, and dreams. Interrogating these many facets of drift—and allowing ourselves to drift with, through, and alongside these thinkers and their texts—allows us to respond to a question put forward by Amadahy and Lawrence at the very end of their collaborative essay: "The colonial system benefits greatly from the fact that our communities are in a perpetual state of crisis. But do we not owe it to the coming generations to find a way of supporting each other and the land that sustains us all?" (131). Drift—as a form of agency—is one decolonial gesture towards different possible futures.

As we theorize drifting, so too do we drift. Engaging with drift as methodology, we grasp at texts, our bodies and spirits searching for meaning. But the wor(l)ds do not always form; they resist, evade, refuse capture. Like leaves spiraling in a river, we float, our bodies suspended in the current, meandering through and past ideas, our thoughts swirling in the eddies along the edges of the page. So too do we tumble in the prairie wind, our thoughts gathering dust and debris into themselves as they drift through pasts and presents, into longings and desires. We drift across genre and through time and space, exploring the many faceted possibilities of drift in order to complicate maps, unmake colonial scripts, and contaminate borders.

We begin with a discussion of intimacy and desire, moving towards a central question: is it possible to make love in the face of violence? To answer this question, we turn first to Billy-Ray Belcourt and Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, both of whom consider the relationships between desire, colonial violence, and healing. In their work, drift is about excess, a too-muchness that undoes colonial fantasies. For Dionne Brand, meanwhile, desire can be read as yearning, a longing for impossible origins. Through Brand's critical interrogation of maps, drift emerges as a resistance to capture and containment but also as a process of layering and sedimentation. Taking our cue from Belcourt's "There is a Dirt Road in Me" (from *This Wound is a World*), Erica Violet Lee's wastelands theory (2016), Zoe S. Todd's "petrochemical politics as kin" (2017, 106), and Michelle Murphy's "alterlife" (2017), we then consider drift as dust, wastelands, ruin, and hope, that is, as layered and sedimented assemblages of toxic waste and opportunity. For M. NourbeSe Philip, drifting is about refusal: transforming words into sounds, cries, grief, and horror, Philip offers the endlessly haunted Middle Passage as a way of articulating the fundamental illogic of colonial logic. "There is no telling this story; it must be told" (Philip 2008,189). Finally, drift asks us to attend to ghosts, that is, to acknowledge the drift of past-present-future; that is, the impossibility of a future in the absence of a past.

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We entrust institutions of intimacy, such as family, love, and nation, to produce the life we desire, to fulfill our optimism (Berlant 2000, 281). Intimacy, as that space of our shared breathing (Ahmed 2000, 140), facilitates relationships, bridges spaces, and mediates encounters. We are inextricably connected with one another. But, shaped through politics, bodies, and histories, intimacy is always already haunted by the very institutions that bring it into being. While colonial politics and policies have attempted to manage the boundaries of intimacy, such policies and politics are continually unsettled, undermined, and challenged. Bodies, like landscapes, evade definition: desiring and drifting, they resist the mappings laid out for them. Indeed, as the work of Antoinette Burton (1998), Durba Ghosh (2005), Cecilia Morgan

(2008), and Ann Laura Stoler (2010), among others, suggests, if some forms of intimacy have been problematic to colonial authorities, they have also been opportunities, chances for those subject to colonial regulation to challenge colonial logics.

Desire, these scholars assert, cannot be contained by institutional logics; rather, desire is disruptive, messy, disordered, unruly. Like a heaving ocean in a storm, desire seems to drift: it spills out, spills over, breaches banks, and consumes (Simpson 2017b, 66), undermining any attempts at control. Further, like dust tumbling across a colonized landscape, drift resists containment; as vibrant matter, to follow the work of Jane Bennett (2010), it draws the human, non-human, and more-than-human into itself, in this way complicating notions of toxicity, love, survival, and thriving.

Can we make love in the face of violence (Simpson 2017b, 43-6)? While taken up variously by the four writers and thinkers whose works we interrogate, this question lies at the heart of their thinking. How do we make sense of afterlives of colonialism and the ongoingness of violence? And further, in relation to our thinking and our drifting, what possibilities reside in reimagining, rethinking, and re-storying drift?

In his poetry collection *This Wound is a World*, Billy-Ray Belcourt refuses colonial scripts of heteronormative intimacy by embracing queer Indigenous desire as possibility, as futuristic. Flooding the boundaries between sadness and desire, violence and healing, Belcourt's poetry disrupts the implication that desire and violence are distinct, that healing comes from the separation between the two. Instead, he suggests the opposite: by blurring binaries and unmapping categories, queer Indigenous desire drifts. That is, in complicating colonial fantasies of love, nation, and family, Belcourt offers messier cosmologies of love that are borderless, violent, heartbroken, ancestral, queer, and resistant, refusing to sanitize the humanness of loving that includes grief, histories, sadness, sanctuary, and political context. As Belcourt writes in

"Love and Other Experiments," "5. what happens when decolonial love becomes a story you tell yourself after he falls asleep? / 6. i tell him, *you breathe us, we are in you, look at the blood on your hands*" (2017, 30; italics original). In this way, Belcourt highlights the ways in which our shared conditions of political melancholy, violence, and grief intersect with our intimate encounters with sex, desire, love, joy, comfort, and hope.

In *This Wound is a World*, sadness and love collude, death and sex collide, land and body entangle, fucking and healing stick. These complicated, messy relations build worlds. Belcourt's poetry holds space for the unhappy affects that often constellate love in times of suffering, grief, and fear. Instead of turning away from suffering in order to romanticize love, Belcourt asks us how desire and violence collude under conditions of colonialism (2017, 58-59). Belcourt's poetry invites the contradictions, frustrations, and complexities of queer, Indigenous love and sex, holding space for complexity as resistance.

We might consider in relation to this approach Leanne Betasamosake Simpson's personification of sadness as a lover who embodies the complicated relations we build with feeling. In "Brown Against Blue" she writes, "I cheat on myself with Sad and she never abandons me … my constant lover Sad, as muted, dysmorphic entrapment" (2017, 35). For Simpson, this situation is not "awful"; rather, it is the messy—and necessary—kinship of love, sadness, desire, and need. Indeed, Simpson's fiction echoes Belcourt's assertion that "to be unbodied is the 'sadder than that' of love, but it is also love's first condition of possibility" (2017, 59). Love and sadness are entwined. This is what Brand would call "desire in the face of ruin" (193). To love in the face of violence, to find joy and pleasure with one another while living in oppressive conditions of erasure and oppression, is not to abandon sadness and heartache. Rather, it is to resist the notion that love and happiness are only possible through conformity to colonial ideas of family; that sadness is the singular and immobilizing affect of marginalized communities. By muddling the distinc-

tion between "positive" and "negative" affects, decolonial love is, instead, understood as the complexity of sadness and joy, desire, and grief, unsettling colonial fantasies and institutional control of emotion and kinship. Drift, in Belcourt's framing, is necessarily about resisting containment, undoing the boundaries of colonial desire by moving across and through them.

Equally significant is the fact that Belcourt resists this violence. By flooding the pages with "unbodying," through a queered, Indigenous time and space, Belcourt protests colonial desires to police, grief, death, community, love, and intimacy through an interplay of love and sadness. In "Native Too," Belcourt juxtaposes sex and healing, writing, "i wanted him to fuck me, / so i could finally begin / to heal." (2017, 26). Belcourt unsettles colonial borders that have mapped intimacy and sought to control queer Indigenous desire. Belcourt's insistent drifting shows us that politics and love can never be divorced. Intimacy, here—that space between violence and desire, community and loneliness, politics and love—is the volatile glue that unites them, a haunted, keening, unbodied worlding that is constantly under negotiation. Belcourt centers queer Indigenous desire through the deconstruction of the colonial fetishization of violence and death (58). Belcourt brings fucking and political grief, desire and social melancholy, sex and healing together, drifting beyond the boundaries of sanitized intimacy as a private endeavor in service of national purity. Flooding colonial fantasies that imagine desire and violence, joy and sadness, love and hurting as distinct affects reserved for distinct bodies, Belcourt undermines racialized and gendered borders, insisting that we are always more than bodies, we are dirt roads (13), abandoned houses (27), late night text messages (20; 36), wounds (27), worlds (12; 26).

In her study of queer Indigenous women's poetry, Arianne Burford writes that poetry can "provide a theory about how story and the erotic can destabilize colonial, heteropatriarchal power structures to envision healing from historical and present day traumas rooted in violence against Indigenous land and people" (2013, 169) The intimacy in Belcourt's writing entangles sadness, love, embodiment, violence, and desire beyond the erotic. Constellating relations of family, self, space, friends, ancestors, offspring, ghosts, and hook-ups opens new possibilities for how we might search for, find and give love as a means to survive in this world. Belcourt writes, "if i have a body, let it be a book of sad poems. i mean it," and further, "indigeneity troubles the idea of 'having' a body, so if i am somehow, miraculously, bodied then my skin is a collage of meditations on love and shattered selves" (2017, 22). In this way, Belcourt exercises Burford's assertion that "poetry and story can express a methodology—and thus a theory—for hope, survival, and change, spoken into existence through language. It has the power to transform, reshape, resist, and revision the world" (2013, 169).

But violent desire, or desire in the face of violence, is not Belcourt's only exploration of drifting intimacy. In "Native Too," Belcourt imagines love through touch, as a sort of co-worlding, a coming to being through the intimate interplay between bodies and histories: "i wanted to taste / a history of violence / caught in the roof of his mouth. / i wanted our saliva to mix / and create new bacterial ecologies: contagions that could infect / the trauma away" (26). Here love is infected, polluted, swollen with the trauma of colonial violence. Love spills over. Like Simpson's "Big Water," a story from her 2017 collection, *This Accident of Being Lost*, this love is "full, too full" (Simpson 2017b, 66). As Belcourt writes, "If I know anything now, it is that love is the clumsy name we give to a body spilling outside of itself" (2017, 59). Love—drift—here, is excess; Belcourt's love and Simpson's lake are bodies that cannot be contained, that contaminate boundaries even as they themselves are contaminated, that drift beyond themselves, spill, swell, overflow. For Simpson and Belcourt, drift—aimless, passive, and fundamentally antithetical to western imperatives to progress and efficiency—must be read as resistance. The relationships they articulate resist the contours of the western, cisgender, heteronormative, monogamous imagination and refuse the relentless forward march of "progress."

Instead, fostered by violence and excess, they point to different possibilities for intimacy and desire in the face of colonial violence that continues to rupture relations. Relationality, for Belcourt and Simpson, emerges not through the artifices of heteronormative western monogamy but through sometimes volatile encounters.

If Belcourt and Simpson evoke drift through watery metaphors that ask us to interrogate the underpinnings of colonial assumptions of love, desire, and violence, Dionne Brand, in *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, returns us to land and to the endless drifting of impossible origins. This deeply personal memoir asks us to think about drift as resistance to capture. In *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, Dionne Brand writes an impossible map that tells a story of longing and erasure, desire, and violence. And yet this map is not just a story of loss; it is also an active unwriting and rewriting of maps and mapping. Brand's map must be understood as a fundamental rupture and an opening to a way of haunted being without origins. This new map cannot be fixed. Rather, because of the violent legacies of transatlantic slavery, it drifts. As Brand writes, "Our ancestors were bewildered because they had a sense of origins—some country, some village, some family where they belonged and from which they were rent. We, on the other hand, have no such immediate sense of belonging, only of drift" (2001, 118). Drift, in Brand's understanding, articulates the frayed edges of an impossible map (Wah 1996, 1) and the indefinability of borders (Anzaldúa 2007, 23). While linked to the forms of drift articulated by Belcourt and Simpson, in that it is founded on and through colonial histories of violence, Brand's drifting map gestures not towards what Leanne Betasamosake Simpson might understand as "land as pedagogy" (2014) but, rather, towards an unrequitable longing for a land—or lands—that she can never reclaim. In this way, this particular articulation of drift highlights the tension that lies at the heart of Indigenous and Black solidarity building: What role can land play in building alliances? If land is pedagogy, as Simpson has argued, what might that mean

for peoples who have been forcibly and violently removed from their places of origin and settled in new lands, in the process displacing those who are already living there?

But at the same time, this gaping wound—this map of violence and erasure—must also be read through the lens of yearning, that is, as a desire for belonging, a haunted silence that cannot be fulfilled. If Belcourt and Simpson focus on the links between intimacy and sadness, Brand emphasizes haunting and loss. "I cannot go back to where I came from," writes Brand. "It no longer exists. It should not exist" (2001, 90). For Brand, drift is the incomprehensibility of the Middle Passage and the continuing violence in the afterlives of slavery, but this form of drift might also then be imagined through the ongoing erasure of Indigenous peoples. Drift as a process of sedimentation, for example, might be understood as the endless layering of histories across and through each other. Belcourt writes, "we are a people / who proliferate / only as potentiality" (2017, 13). Brand's map and her history too, also exist "only as potentiality," suspended in the drift both of an endless and bottomless ocean, and of yearned-for but impossible and unsettled land-based place of origin. As she observes at the very end of her memoir, "After the Door of No Return, a map was only a set of impossibilities, a set of changing locations" (2001, 224).

"The sea," Derek Walcott has famously written, "is history" (1979, 25). While West African spiritualities acknowledge water's life-giving essence (Stipriaan 2003; 2007), the Middle Passage is intimately associated with death. As M. Jacqui Alexander reminds us, "Not only humans made the Crossing, traveling only in one direction through Ocean given the name Atlantic. Grief traveled as well" (2006, 289). The haunting of the Middle Passage suggests an endlessly weeping wound of grief, what Dionne Brand articulates as "a rupture in history, a rupture in the quality of being …. a rupture of geography" (2006, 5).

However, Belcourt's imaginings of decolonial desire offer the possibility of hope. By making wounds into

worlds, Belcourt subverts the pathologization of trauma, complicating wounds as more than sites to be mended. As he writes in "We Were Never Meant to Break Like This," "the future is already over, but that doesn't mean we don't have anywhere else to go" (2017, 19). Wounds that world smear past, present, and future together; they are "time travel" (Recollet 2017, n.p.). Wounds that world are flooded with feeling and ghosts. Wounds that world are cosmic oscillations that constellate relations, times, places, feelings, bodies, and knowledge. Wounds that "stretch these star map hides so that you can build that frame and we can create maps to tomorrow" (Recollet 2017, n.p.). These constellations queer: they turn contradictions into harmonies; paradoxes are the portal to truth, blurring is a way of seeing.

"I cannot unhappen history," observes Dionne Brand (2001, 203). But what she can do, following Belcourt, is remap her desires: "A map, then," she writes, "is only a life of conversations about a forgotten list of irretrievable selves" (2001, 224). Perhaps, Brand suggests, she has placed too much hope in the impossibility of the map. Perhaps, taking her cue from Belcourt, she might instead imagine this impossible map—this drifting across time and space—as that which makes sense of the wound, the renting, the tear, the gaping. Drift keeps the wound open; it requires the "forgotten list of irretrievable selves." (Brand 2001, 224).

So, too, does drift then enable us to keep the map open, challenging its apparent fixity and undermining the possibility of easy origins. Drift is the frayed edge; the impossible resolution (Tuck & Ree 2013). Unmappable and abject, origins as drift are mobile; not only are they unable to settle, but they refuse to settle. Indeed, as Brand writes in *Land to Light On*, "If I am peaceful in this discomfort, is not peace, / is getting used to harm" (1997, 3; see also Tuck & Ree 2013, 643).

If drift has most conventionally been interrogated in relation to water, it can also be read in relation to land. Belcourt's prairie landscape drifts: dust floats and rivers meander, silt shaping snaking patterns across the plains. Belcourt writes, "there is a dirt road in me" (2017, 13). These words direct us to isolated prairie roads, rural routes that stretch in ribbons across plains gift-wrapped in colonial paper. While they gesture also towards Dian Million's essay "There is a River in Me: Theory from Life" (2014), Belcourt directs his attention not to rivers that sparkle and flow with life but rather to the kinds of love and relation that confound in a prairie wasteland. A dirt road, after all, doesn't appear to promise much. Drift on this road is the tumbling of leaves, weeds, dust, and wind; further, it is debris—plastic bags, beer cans, chip packages, diapers, spare tires, washing machines—all gathered together in heaps, assemblages of both waste and opportunity. In this way, we can imagine drift also as an assemblage, an accumulation of garbage dumps, clear cuts, and reserves and, further, of abandoned plantations, wastelands designed to contain the detritus of colonial administrations (see, for example, Davies 2018, Hoover 2017, Keeling & Sandlos, 2015, Murphy 2017, Nunn 2018, Simmons 2017).

Belcourt's dirt road seems to lead nowhere; instead, it meanders towards an unsalvageable past. Drift, here, is the unfinished and seemingly impossible project of healing. While Belcourt may well want to fuck in order to heal (2017, 26), as a dirt road, Belcourt's body is a body denied. As Leanne Simpson writes in "road salt," "licking the road is its own humiliation" (2017, 63). A wasteland (Lee 2016), Belcourt's poetic body is "the back alley of the world" (Belcourt 2017, 25), a place frequented only by garbage trucks. Desire, shame, and disgust intermingle in an uncomfortable assemblage.

Belcourt's dirt road, the back alley of the world, Simpson's road-salted body (2017, 63) and over-full lake spilling its banks, tipsy with environmental contaminants (2017b, 66), Belcourt's people denied access to their languages and stalked by "massive genocidal violence …. as if death and indigeneity were co-constitutive categories" (Belcourt 2017, 58)—all, in the words of Erica Violet Lee, can be read

as "spaces deemed unworthy of healing because of the scale and amount of devastation that has occurred there" (2016, n.p.). What does it mean to walk in the shadow of violence, to count death as your mirror? What does it mean to drift as dirt road, a back alley on the haunted loneliness of an emptied prairie?

Erica Violet Lee reminds us that while the dirt road is haunted, it is also a space of healing. "The heart of wastelands theory is simple," she writes.

> Here, we understand that there is nothing and no one beyond healing. So we return again and again to the discards, gathering scraps for our bundles, and we tend to the devastation with destabilizing gentleness, carefulness, softness. For those of us in the wastelands—for those of us who are the wastelands—caring for each other in this way is refusing a definition of worthiness that will never include us. (Lee 2016, n.p.)

Wastelands theory, Lee argues, is about transformation; a theory of care made possible only through the drifting debris of a haunted past. In this framing, the dirt road, the back alley, and the road salt are sites of both refusal and resurgent love (Simpson 2017a). As Leanne Simpson writes in "Leaks," "*you are rebellion, resistance, re-imagination …. you are not a vessel for white settler shame*" (2013, 21; italics original). In this resistant reading, drift is not aimless, nor is it passive. Rather, as a form of refusal, drift offers resurgent love as a necessary challenge to colonial imperatives.

Indeed, for Michelle Murphy, the dirt road is defined by the very entanglement of refusal and resurgent love. Murphy uses the term "alterlife" to acknowledge that this "entanglement forms part of contemporary existence in this moment, in the ongoing aftermath. And yet the openness to alteration may also describe the potential to become something else, to defend and persist, to recompose relations to water and land" (Murphy 2017, 500). Alterlife, then, might be understood as the drift between toxicity and survival, waste and possibility, decomposition and care. For Murphy, drifting through and "bursting open categories" works as "a tactic for taking back phenomena

from the epistemologies that have consistently erased the constitutive violence propping them up" (2017, 498).

This tactic extends to all our relations: Belcourt's dirt road encompasses not only the dusty wasteland of a body resisting colonialism; it also includes the plastic bags, discarded tires, and toxic garbage that drift in prairie winds, gathering in heaps along the roadside, or in haphazard dumps near reserve lands. In this way, reading through and with drift requires us to pay attention not only to desire, but also to toxicity, that is, to considering care and love in the face of wounding, violence, and contamination. We might consider here the work of Zoë S Todd, for example, who urges us to consider how care, responsibility, and relationality are complicated in a contaminated, petrochemical wasteland. We must "tend to these offspring of our petrochemical politics as kin," Todd writes (2017, 106). By using Indigenous relationality and Métis law as a means of "imagining how we may de-weaponise … oil and gas" (2017, 107), Todd renegotiates oil and plastic as kin, opening new possibilities for imagining our entangled relationships. This practice, we argue, is drift; it is to love along a dirt road, to live in the hauntings of the Door of No Return, to resist. Todd's understanding of relationality reminds us that drift as practice is both about responsibility to our kin and about resistance through care. Drifting with dust, then, might be understood as an invitation to presence.

Drift, as we have already encountered, is not just about beauty, it is also about violence. So, too, is it about loss and, in this way, it must also be associated with witnessing. In her work *Zong!*, poet and essayist M. NourbeSe Philip reimagines the *Gregson v. Gilbert* court case, a case fought over insurance monies in the aftermath of a massacre that saw between 132 and 150 enslaved Africans thrown overboard from the English ship, the *Zong*, as a series of "Zongs" that spill across the pages of the text. In these poems, space crowds out the letters, remapping language and thought in a performance of refusal: a refusal to trade in tragedy (Austen 2011, Tuck & Yang 2014a,

2014b). As drift, these poems refuse the work of linearity. Instead, they are, in Philip's words, "not-telling" (2008, 198), "half-tellings" (199), and "un-tellings" (199) that must, nevertheless, be told. However, in its "not-telling," "half-tellings," and "un-tellings," *Zong!* is also, simultaneously, a performance of silence. In the *Zongs*, drift is the unsettled silence between the letters, the gaping spaces that mark the open wound of the Middle Passage. If for Brand drift might be understood as the impossibility of origins and, from there, return, for Philip, drift is the impossibility of logic; drift renders colonial language unmappable, uncomfortable, unrealizable, indeed, fundamentally illogical.

As Philip writes in "Notanda," the essay that follows the poems in *Zong!*:

> The not-telling of this particular story is in the fragmentation and mutilation of the text, forcing the eye to track across the page in an attempt to wrest meaning from words gone astray. ... The resulting abbreviated, disjunctive, almost non-sensical style of the poems demands a corresponding effort on the part of the reader to "make sense" of an event that eludes understanding, perhaps permanently. ... In the discomfort and disturbance created by the poetic text, I am forced to make meaning from apparently disparate elements—in so doing I implicate myself. The risk—of contamination—lies in piecing together the story that cannot be told. And since we have to work to complete the events, we all become implicated in, if not contaminated by, this activity. (2008, 198)

Drift is manifest perhaps most clearly in the spaces between the letters, that is, in the unmaking of language. Words are fragmented, reduced to sounds and cries; language—as we know it—is impossible. Drifting between the sounds and cries and ululations, readers must confront the illogic of colonial logic. But Philip takes the metrics of colonial logics further. The "archival mathematics" (McKittrick 2014, 20) of the court records account for the enslaved only in

numbers. However, Philip names them, arranging letters into names in a manifest—*obiter dicta*, or in footnotes (Philip 2008, 199)—that run along the bottom of every page of the first section of *Zong!*: "Zuka Tuwalole Urbi Femi Chuma Wemusa Ilesanmi Nayo Odai," she writes. "Abioye Gulai Sekelaga Dalili N'Nanna Rufaro Uwimana Nasiche Asura" (14-17). These names are a recitation, an incantation, an intimate scroll of the dead, each one called into being through and with the fragmentation of the text. They are an archival undoing—"negroes exist / for the throwing" (34)—that simultaneously challenges and brings into high relief the foundational violence of colonial and imperial endeavours. They are, in Philip's words, "the this / the that / the frenzy" (2008, 29).

And yet, as Erin M. Fehskens observes, Philip's list contains 228 names, far more than the reputed 132 to 150 who were massacred. Who, then, are these witnesses? What stories do they hold in their memories? "This chain of names," Fehskens offers, "bears witness to what remains unrecoverable, an historical record of Africans on board the *Zong*" (2012, 415). In this way, Philip forces her readers to account not only for the violence aboard the *Zong* but also for the violence of archival erasure (Austen 2011, Fehskens 2012, Hartman 2008, Lambert 2016, McKittrick 2014). Drift moves us between, forces us to confront illogic as we drift from sound to sound, borne on the invisible waves of Philip's literary imaginary. The story of the Zong, this drifting reminds us, should never have been realized; indeed, it cannot be realized. The *Zong* is an impossible story that can never be told; it makes no sense. As such it remains suspended, drifting unfinished and incomplete in its horror. Drift, here, is the impossible spacetime that somehow made events like the *Zong* massacre possible; it is a wounding that cannot ever be resolved, a discomfort from which we may never recover. Drift is a witnessing of ongoing horror. We may be tempted to write a happy ending, an imagined future where all of our dreams come true, but Philip's work suggests that it might be more productive to, in the words of Donna Haraway, "[stay] with the trouble" (2016, 1), that is, to refuse the linearity of a future orientation for a drifting that

allows past, present, and future to collide with one another.

Also key to Philip's work is her engagement with water. *Zong!* undulates, rocks, bobs. Articulated visually as a series of waves, the text floats, suspended in a constantly mobile and profoundly unpredictable seascape. The saltwater of the Middle Passage. The freshwater rations that elicited the massacre. The rains that filled empty barrels. The "eleven days" of water listed in summary of the appeal (*Gregson v. Gilbert* 1783, 629). The bodies thrown overboard, one by one by one. As Fehskens observes:

> Philip's water … sets the literal stage of her poem—the location in question is the Atlantic—but the poetic dispersion of the word, broken across several lines, also enacts the timely interval between the moment a body hits the water and the moment before the body's limbs are submerged. In that space of time, water breaks itself and creates a space for the body, so while the spaces in the poem communicate an increasing aquatic urgency (that salt water will become a grave and that fresh water will run out) the spaces also stand in for the bodies that disrupt the surface of the sea. (2012, 408)

This is haunted water: "Unruly, full of desire, unsettling" (Tuck & Ree 2013, 651), this water is both surface and depth, seething with longings, grief, passions, love, and death. Here, drift offers a way in to understanding the (un)mappable as a floating, suspended haunted present not only inevitably informed and framed by the past, but at risk of being submerged, drowned, massacred by it.

"When you are a ghost," writes Belcourt in "Time Contra Time," "all time is unlived time" (2017, 40). Ghosts drift, formless, through the world; unsettled, they locate themselves in the between. Neither here nor there, they roam aimlessly, suspended in a netherworld from which they cannot escape. And yet, if we want to attend to ghosts, we, too, must seek to occupy the space of the in-between, the drift of past-present-future where meaning collapses. To unsettle

intimacy; to become unbodied through love (Belcourt 2017, 59) is to invite the cartographic ghosts in, to acknowledge their disruptive presence as integral to any mapping endeavour (Tuck & Ree 2013, 642). We might consider, then, that to unsettle intimacy is to drift, to find meaning in the spaces that cannot be defined, whose borders are mobile, fluid, eroding. To drift is to move outside of linear time. Indeed, it is to refuse its contours altogether.

How do we account for ghosts? What do we make when linear time is flooded by histories and futures and, at the same time, all-too-much-now-ness? What do we do with wounds that refuse to be sutured? When love overwhelms armpits so porous they extrude, queering the boundary between skin and air (Belcourt 2017, 26)?

Drifting through intimacy, love, violence, and histories, Belcourt, Simpson, Brand, and Philip offer us the world-making potential of refusal (Tuck & Yang 2014a, 2014b). Each writer, shaped by specific and individual histories of colonialism, offers us something different. Nevertheless, they share a commitment to decoloniality. "*You are not a vessel for white settler shame*," Leanne Simpson insists (2015, 21; italics original). Instead, she asserts a rebellious theory of love that emerges only in the spaces of the in-between, drifting on our breath, through our histories, over the water and the ice: "*you are the breath over the ice on the lake. you are the one / the grandmothers sing to through the rapids. you are the / saved seeds of allies. you are the space between embraces*" (2015, 21; italics original). Simpson's world-making depends on her deep connection to lands, waters, and histories: in these lines of poetry Simpson speaks to the ways that our ancestors are present through land; through our relationship with water, the past haunts us, teaches us, holds us, sings to us. The present is both a breath over frozen water, and depths that plunge to the bottom of the lake.

Brand, meanwhile, unmoored and untethered by the violent erasure of transatlantic slavery and the consequent impossibility of return, suggests that drifting

between our haunted pasts and unknown futures is the only possible way forward. For Brand, unlike for Simpson, there is no beginning, no home to return to: "It no longer exists. It should not exist" (2001, 90). Nor is there ever an end; rather, "we are always in the middle of a journey" (2001, 49). And yet, as writers, thinkers, and readers, we too drift, float, and dream together, suspended between opposing poles: "There is no telling this story; it must be told" (Philip 2008, 189).

Eve Tuck and C. Ree remind us that, "for ghosts, the haunting is the resolving, it is not what needs to be resolved" (2013, 642). Drift, mobile, uncomfortable, undirected, unfinished, and ultimately impossible, can, in its myriad forms, enable us to live well with ghosts, to keep our complicated pasts alive in our presents. "These are," Karyn Recollet asserts, "the ancient future teachings on how to be in these worlds together" (2017, n.p.). In its aimlessness, drift refuses mapping, grounding, containment, capture, measurement. In its seeming passivity, drift resists colonial desires. Instead, drift celebrates new becomings, a multiplicity of possibilities, a scattering, layering, imaginative commitment to chance, potential, serendipity, and the power of the journey itself.

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Gender, Race, and Precarity: Theorizing the Parallels Between Early Childhood Educators and Sessional Faculty in Ontario

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Abstract: This paper critically examines the parallels of devaluation encountered by early childhood educators and sessional faculty members in Ontario as reflective praxis. The three authors' experiences are diverse and include a tenured professor and two sessional faculty members, both of whom have worked in the field of Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). The narratives of the authors inform the concerning trend of precarity and devaluation embedded within two polarizing spectrums of the Ontario educational landscape: Post-Secondary Education (PSE) and ECEC. Although these aforementioned areas of education rarely intersect, the authors centre them on the frontline of the neoliberal assault on education transpiring in Ontario today. The three authors self-identify as female settlers; two have doctoral degrees; one has an MA and is an early childhood educator (ECE). One author self-identifies as a racialized and white-coded cis-gendered woman, and two self-identify as white, cis-gendered women. All of the authors have worked in Ontario's post-secondary landscape, one as sessional faculty member and then a tenured professor, and two as sessional faculty members. The paper will problematize the neoliberal assault on higher education and ECEC through a Feminist Political Economy (FPE) conceptual framework in order to draw on the multifaceted ways fem-

inized discourses devalue the work of ECEs and perpetuate the overrepresentation of women, particularly racialized women in precarious faculty positions.

Introduction

Across Ontario, the devaluation of women's labour has become increasingly evident among two rarely compared but interrelated fields of education: Post-Secondary Education (PSE) and Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC). In the PSE context, this trend has been marked by the overreliance on sessional lecturers, most of whom are women, despite continuing tuition increases. In the ECEC context, persistently low pay and chronic devaluation of ECEs (a profession also dominated by women), although accompanied by increasing childcare fees for families, has compounded poor working conditions. Both occupations are characterized by the feminization of poverty, low pay, poor working conditions, and limited opportunities for growth. Both arenas are analyzed in this paper through a Feminist Political Economy (FPE) framework in order to determine how social norms, domestic work, and capitalist economies shape women's experiences and determine women's work.

We draw on political, social, and economic underpinnings that characterize the intersectionalities of oppression, including race, gender, social-economic status, that emerge to frame experiences of women's participation in the labour force. While women in both sessional and tenured professoriate positions are expected to take on additional unpaid labour, including mentorship and guidance roles, women working in ECEC are discursively constructed as natural caregivers and substitute mothers (Bezanson 2017; Moss 2006; Nair 2014).

Our objective is to theorize the parallels of devaluation, precarity, and gendered labour implicating the ECEC and PSE fields. This paper is divided into five sections: 1) this introduction, which provides the contextual factors underpinning the issues facing Ontario ECEs and sessional faculty, 2) neoliberalism in Ontario, 3) the conceptual framework of Feminist Political Economy, 4) situating ourselves through our own narratives, and 5) conclusions and discussion.

Neoliberalism in Education and Childcare

Ontario has witnessed the unfolding of two trends at both ends of the education spectrum for quite some time. The first involves the steep increases in tuition fees for Ontario students, who now pay the highest tuition fees in Canada, at an average of $9,500 a year (Shaker, Macdonald & Wodrich 2014; Statistics Canada 2019). Ontario students simultaneously receive the lowest per-student funding in Canada (Kirmse 2018). Skyrocketing tuition fees have accompanied severe government cuts in PSE funding, thereby shifting educational responsibility from the state to the individual and thus perpetuating the commodification of higher education (Giroux 2014; Jones & Field 2014; 2016). Additionally, funding cuts to PSE initiated by the Ontario Progressive Conservative Party in 2018 under the leadership of Premier Doug Ford have increased the financial burden on students. Proposed changes include the erosion of both the Ontario Student Assistance Program (OSAP) and the Province's student loan program, which would effectively remove the six-month grace period before loan repayment.

The second phenomenon concerns the increasing marketization of ECEC in the province (Halfon & Langford 2015). In addition to having the highest tuition fees in Canada, Ontario also has the most expensive childcare costs in the country (Bezanson 2017). The highest childcare costs are concentrated in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area (GTA). Childcare fees in Toronto average $1,758 a month, or $21,096 per year, fees that are coupled with a chronic shortage of licensed, regulated childcare centres. Currently only 20 percent of Ontario childcare facilities are licensed (Kirmse 2018; Mahboubi 2018). The rising cost of living in Ontario has not kept pace with wages and often detrimentally impacts women, as women are forced to choose between working and staying home. This situation thus perpetuates the gendered wage gap (Richardson et al. 2013).

These two trends cannot be divorced from the gendered, racialized, and neoliberal hegemonic power relations from which they are situated. As tuition and childcare costs have swollen to record heights, university professors and ECEs have seen little to no improvements in their pay, benefits, or working conditions. Rather, the marketization of both higher education and ECEC is a result of the lack of a national education strategy as well as a national childcare policy framework that has downloaded social-liberal state responsibilities onto individuals. Government retrenchment from PSE funding has contributed to an overreliance on sessional faculty, or on faculty who often have the same qualifications as their tenured colleagues but are paid on a precarious per-course or per-contract basis (Faucher 2014; Foster 2016; Henry et al. 2017). The marketization of childcare across Ontario due to lack of government investment in social policies such as childcare has individualized family responsibility for funding childcare initiatives. The continued reliance on private funds for childcare translates into higher costs for care and less pay for ECEs, despite increased professional expectations and workloads (Osgood 2010). ECEC continues to be conceptualized as private, feminized, and ultimately a welfare issue, distinguished from Kindergarten to Grade 12 (K-12) publicly funded education (Langford et al. 2017).

The majority of professoriate positions, once regarded as among the most secure positions in Canada, have shifted to a precarious labour pool of highly educated, skilled surplus workers for universities to draw from in order to cut costs (Muzzin & Limoges 2008; Muzzin & Meaghan 2014; Shaker & Pasma 2018). While Ontario lags behind its American counterparts in terms of data collection, which is the case for Canada in general (this segment of the university workforce is not reported on by Statistics Canada), studies released in 2018 help to paint a clear picture of precarity in the academy in Ontario and the country as a whole (Foster & Birdsell-Bauer 2018; Shaker & Pasma 2018; OCUFA 2018). Canadian universities have become entrenched in "academic capitalism," which Slaughter and Rhoades (2005) define as "the involvement of colleges and faculty in market-like behaviours" (37). At 53.6 percent, over half of all faculty

appointments in Canada are currently contract or sessional (Shaker & Pasma 2018). In Ontario, that number is said to be at 58 percent (OCUFA 2018). Sessional faculty is defined by Jones & Field (2014) as "a category of workers who are employed to teach a course and are usually paid on a per-course basis" (14). The average pay of non-tenured faculty members fluctuates in Ontario between $5,584 per course at the lowest end of the spectrum and $9,500 at the top end (York University Faculty Association 2018). Salary levels are difficult to determine as there is no standard, province-wide consensus on what course load amount equates to a full-time teaching load, nor is there guarantee of a set amount of courses per sessional faculty per term or per academic calendar year (Jones & Field 2016; Giroux 2014). For contract faculty, job insecurity is ever present (Foster & Birdsell-Bauer 2018). Thus, such jobs are in stark opposition to tenure-track/stream appointments where candidates enter a probationary period of employment as an Assistant Professor. After this probationary period, a review is conducted of their research, service, and teaching via tenured faculty members and a decision is reached upon whether the candidate will receive tenure/permanent appointment.

The proportion of permanent full-time faculty at Ontario universities has not kept pace with exuberant growth in student enrolment. Each university holds autonomy in terms of employment and budgeting, operating as "autonomous corporations" (Jones & Field 2014, 5). Undergraduate enrolment in Ontario has grown by 28 percent and graduate enrolment by 31 percent. While the overreliance on sessional faculty is in part attributed to government funding cutbacks, this overreliance is also a by-product of the neoliberal market model with which the university is increasingly aligned (Jones & Field 2014). The massification of higher education, which has translated into high enrolment rates and increasing tuition, has not translated into better wages and working conditions for the majority of faculty. According to Shaker and Pasma's (2018) report, two thirds of Ontario contract faculty experience stress due to their precarious workplace situations, as well as stress relating to

major life events, including difficulty obtaining a bank loan, rental agreement, or mortgage due to unstable and changing work and pay ratios. Changes to OSAP drafted by the Ford administration have effectively eliminated the free tuition program for low-income students (Jones 2019). Under the previous Liberal government led by Kathleene Wynne, OSAP loans were converted into grants to offset Ontario's rising tuition costs. Under the Liberals, students were offered a six-month interest-free "grace-period" upon graduation. However, due to the changes under Doug Ford's government, interest will begin accumulating immediately upon graduation. Severe funding shortfalls and increasing cuts to PSE will not only force Ontario students to make up the operating budget deficits, but will push sessional faculty into worsening labour and financial conditions. Most recently, it was announced by the Ford administration, that university and college funding would become tied to "performance outcomes" that seek to measure how Ontario's 45 PSE institutions conform to metrics, such as student satisfaction. It has been argued that under these performance measures, faculty will be further scrutinized and their academic freedom eroded (Loriggio 2019). This proposed funding shift further entrenches PSE in a neoliberal approach, which, by prioritizing standardization and outcomes, ultimately devalues meaningful engagement, academic integrity, and process quality in the classrooms of Ontario.

Similar to the PSE context, childcare in Ontario is increasingly conceptualized as a privatized service, rather than a social and public good. The consumer model of financing informed by neoliberal choice discourse (Friendly & Prentice 2009; Richardson et al. 2013) also dominates the childcare landscape in Ontario. It positions parents as individual entities or customers who choose services such as private childcare, the Live-In-Caregiver Program, or regulated or unregulated home- or centre-based childcare. Rather than government investment in a national universal childcare strategy, funding incentives, such as the Canada Child Benefit are primarily allocated to families, who must select their own childcare arrangements, a vast majority of which are unregulated (Richardson et al.

2013). Moreover, in addition to this market model of childcare, the discursive devaluation of care work is problematic for the advancement of ECEC workforce. In 2007, Ontario became the first province to professionalize the early childhood workforce, establishing the College of Early Childhood Educators (CECE), a self-regulated body for ECEs. The creation of the CECE resulted in increasing professional duties and expectations for ECEs and childcare workers, which have not materialized into higher wages and improved working conditions (Halfon & Langford 2015). While childcare fees in Ontario have skyrocketed, ECEs wages have not increased and remain at an average of $16.35 an hour (AECEO 2016). In this way, the lack of federal/provincial policy, planning, and funding has caused what Ferns and Beach (2015) refer to as a staff/program divide as parent fees continue to rise and ECE's responsibilities increase, yet ECE wages and working conditions fail to reflect the value of their work. ECEC continues to be conceptualized as a basic commodity rather than as a public or social good (Friendly & Prentice 2009; Powell et al. in press). The lack of a national childcare strategy with a shared social responsibility is strongly correlated with gendered norms of labour, as approximately 97 percent of ECEs are women (Bezanson 2017). ECEC continues to be discursively articulated as care work (a devalued conceptualization within a neoliberal discourse) as opposed to education that is funded and conceptualized as a social responsibility, despite the ethical value and professionalization of the ECEC workforce and decades of research asserting the importance of the early years. This compounds the marginalization of ECEs and impacts their material realities (Powell et al. in press).

In 2010, Ontario's Education Act was amended to align with changes enforced with the roll out of Full Day Kindergarten (FDK) (AECEO 2015). FDK is a publicly funded initiative that allows four- and five-year-olds across Ontario to attend kindergarten in publicly funded school boards with one Ontario Certified Teacher (OCT) and one ECE. ECEC thus experienced an administrative and discursive shift, as it became part of the Ministry of Education rather than the Ministry of Children and Youth (AECEO 2015). This shift was accompanied by an increased public awareness of and interest in the importance of early childhood learning in lifelong educational outcomes. Indeed, while ECEs working alongside OCTs should have reinforced the professional status of ECEs, and public funding could help alleviate the factors that contribute to challenging working conditions and low wages, feedback from the sector continues to demonstrate that this has not been realized. ECEs working within the Ontario public school system continue to experience marginalization and devaluation by way of poor remuneration, a lack of decent work, and a lingering lack of recognition of their value and professional status (AECEO 2016). While there are some visible factors that contribute to the ongoing precarity of ECEs within the FDK system, such as different qualifications and curricular approaches (Underwood et al. 2016) and fragmented unionization (Gananathan 2015), more important are the invisible issues, such as public opinion, power imbalances, and the devaluation of care work (AECEO 2016). While providing opportunity for a collaboration of education and care (which continues to develop and unfold in kindergarten classrooms across Ontario), the enactment of FDK and inclusion of ECEs in the publicly funded education system has done little to improve precarity and has only somewhat reinforced the professional status of ECEs.

While the FDK initiative has the potential to enhance the professionalization of ECEC, teacher and ECE roles are highly stratified (Gibson & Pelltier 2016). The dichotomized role of Registered Early Childhood Educators (RECEs) and OCTs is comparable to that of sessional faculty and tenure track faculty. While teachers are paid substantially more and their salary increases incrementally with each year of service, RECEs' pay remains relatively stagnant (Gananathan 2015). The precarious status of RECEs within publicly funded school boards is marked by their hourly contracts, unpaid summer vacation months, and less job security, as their job permanence depends on enrolment rates of four- and five-year-olds. Finally, there

is the reliance on ECEs to take on split shifts between different schools, requiring them to travel from one location to another (often far apart from one another) in order to make full-time hours, whilst losing break and planning times (Gananathan 2015; Moss 2006). This hierarchical relationship is noted in RECE testimonies of feeling undervalued as an assistant to the teacher; having to share space; experiencing differences in working conditions, pay, and prestige; and experiencing an overall lack of respect from colleagues and parents (Gibson & Pelletier 2016). A professionalization gap exists for ECEs, whereby on the one hand ECEs have professional status allocated by representation in a regulatory body. However, on the other hand, ECEs continue to receive low wages accompanied with higher expectations, including an annual CECE membership fee of $160 a month, which now surpasses the Ontario College of Teachers membership fee (CECE 2019).

The devaluation of care work, which is overwhelmingly performed by women and women from racialized communities (Child Care Human Resources Sector Council 2007), is also visible in the way ECEC is professionalized. When contemplating the meaning of professionalism in the neoliberal social political context such as "Doug Ford's Ontario," it is important to be mindful of the mechanisms by which professionalism is constructed: through masculinist power relations dependent on a gendered and racist capitalist system (Osgood 2010). Professionalism in ECEC has also strengthened the market model approach by enforcing government accountability through an audit culture and by, drawing on Foucault, a panoptic "regulatory gaze" (Osgood 2010, 124). Through professionalization, ECEs in Ontario have been subject to increasing scrutiny and masculinist (government) control without better pay and working conditions. Increased government control mechanisms to the ECEC sector have come to light under Ford's leadership, which seeks to implement massive childcare cuts through the discursive "choice" illusion. Currently, provincial cuts to childcare funding have placed over 6,000 subsidized childcare spots at high risk in the City of Toronto alone (Rider

2019). The cuts were overshadowed by the Ford government's Childcare Access and Relief from Expenses (CARE) tax credit announcement in the 2019 budget. The tax credit claims to provide parents and families with increased choice in determining the childcare services that work best for their situation as individual agents, rather than as a collective social good. Yet, the CARE tax rebate will not offset the high cost of childcare in Ontario, nor will it provide more regulated childcare spaces in the province (Gray 2019). This individual approach to childcare policy further entrenches Ontario in a neoliberal market model, while in no way addressing the ongoing devaluation of care work and its implications on women, in particular racialized women, who take on paid care work responsibilities outside of the home.

Feminist Political Economy

This article draws on a FPE framework to conceptualize work as more than just paid labour, but instead as including unwaged labour, precarious work, social reproduction, and domestic labour (Acker 2011; Armstrong & Connelly 1989; Benzanson 2006; Lewchuk et al. 2015). FPE underlines the gendered, racialized, and social-economic intersectionalities of oppression that in turn frame women's experiences, options, and opportunities (LeBaron & Roberts 2010). In keeping with FPE, we have attempted to provide a gendered, classed, and raced analysis of both PSE and ECEC to understand how institutional, social, and political-economic contexts frame women's work. We agree with the conceptualization of care and education (both in the early years and PSE sectors) as social reproduction: the essential work that must be undertaken in order for society to thrive and continue as women work to ensure the reproduction of the species and the labour force (Bakker 2007; Bezanson 2018). As Bezanson (2018) describes: "Capital, and, in particular, its neo-liberal variant, does not care who undertakes the labours that create, sustain, maintain, reproduce, and socialize workers and norms of employment, but it requires that it be done as cheaply as possible" (172). As such, care and education as social reproduction exist in constant

tension with a neoliberal economic system and the discourses it produces/reproduces (for example, stories that prioritize individualism, rationality, efficiency) and are bound within this system to rely upon (predominantly racialized) women who are thus undervalued and underpaid for their labour.

The rise in sessional faculty has been particularly devastating for women, racialized, and Indigenous scholars (Sensoy & DiAngelo 2017; Wane & Abawi 2018). The majority of sessional faculty are women, one half to one third of which holds a doctoral degree. However, white women continue to fare better than racialized and Indigenous women in the Ivory Tower. According to the most recent census data available, fewer than 4 percent of university professors identify as racialized or "visible minority" women (Statistics Canada 2019) and only 1.4 percent of professors self-identify as Indigenous (Foster & Birdsell-Bauer 2018; Henry et al. 2017); the number of female Indigenous academics is unknown. Racialized and Indigenous women are concentrated in sessional academic work across Ontario and Canada, while tenure-track positions are largely held by white males (Abawi 2018; Sensoy & DiAngelo 2017). These figures are in stark contrast to the increasing demographics of racialized and Indigenous students on Canadian campuses (Henry et al. 2017) and decades of employment equity initiatives to combat institutionalized white privilege in academia (James 2009; 2011). Moreover, tenured/tenure-track racialized and Indigenous women are often expected to take on additional unpaid roles, such as mentorship to racialized students, guidance, and committee representation, all whilst conforming to the status quo of white-dominated departments (Matthew 2016; Nair 2014). The overrepresentation and dominance of white male norms and subjectivity in higher education further frames what the academe legitimizes as academic research, norms, and credibility (Reid & Curry 2019). Thus white-dominated institutions embed and reproduce whiteness through curriculum, institutional culture, validation of knowledge and perspectives, whilst claiming to be race-less and neutral spaces (Bonilla-Silva 2006; Sensoy & DiAngelo 2017).

When contemplating the myriad ways that social reproduction and unpaid and devalued labour implicate ECEC work, it is important to consider that policies and social norms framing ECEC and care work in general are based on privatized, feminized welfare issues rather than ethical work deserving of public funding (Bezanson 2017; Ferns & Beach 2015; Langford et al. 2017). The devaluation of female-dominated care work is compounded by the patriarchal social conservative notion that looking after young children is a natural inclination for women, and thus does not warrant higher wages (Halfon & Langford 2015; Jones, Richardson, & Powell 2019; Moss 2006). According to the Association of Early Childhood Educators Ontario (AECEO) Pre-Budget Submission Report, 24 percent of RECEs working in licensed childcare centres earn $15 an hour or less, another 45 percent earn between $15 and $20, and a significant 67 percent of other program staff working in licensed child care centres earns $11-$15 per hour (AECEO 2018). While Ontario is lacking sufficient workforce data, national and international comparators reinforce experiential knowledge that care labour continues to be downloaded to racialized women who are overrepresented in low-paying positions (Powell et al., in press). Much like the corporate university where the financial onus of higher education is placed on the individual consumer, whereby a degree is purchased as a commodity, ECEC also operates through a marketized corporate approach. Canada lacks a national childcare strategy, as childcare legislation is left to the discretion of the provincial governments. The absence of federal government oversight of childcare policy-making, as well as the erosion of funding, has in turn exacerbated the mass privatization of childcare services. The market model of childcare (Halfon & Langford 2015) is most evident in the locations where childcare services are established, locations that are largely based on financial incentives rather than accessibility, community, and family needs (Bezanson 2017; Ferns & Beach 2015).

Thus far, we have considered how our education and care "systems" are both a result of the current social, political, and economic context (increasingly neoliber-

al in our circumstance) and how they also then reproduce these same trends. In this section, we have presented a brief macro view of the two sectors, demonstrating that our current neoliberal context is increasingly moving education to the margins, with women and racialized and Indigenous women the most marginalized. In turn, we considered how being employed in these unstable sectors of the labour market has a similarly marginalizing affect on women, and racialized women in particular, who are the people caring for children and teaching the majority of undergraduate students. Just as ECEC is gendered and racialized, so is the precarious professoriate. Adopting this perspective allows us to examine the possibilities and constraints for racialized women in different places in the feminized educational labour market. This approach contrasts with and deconstructs the neoliberal approach regarding the dominant meritocratic discourse that "simply trying harder will allow you to be financially rewarded." Our analysis thus demonstrates how work, gender, and race interact to impact people's choices and opportunities. In keeping with a FPE approach, we turn now to the section of this paper that undertakes a micro view and share our lived experience as another way to make this social reality visible.

Personal Narratives

Zuhra Abawi
I have been fortunate to hold various roles in education, as an RECE, an OCT, and sessional faculty member. I self-identify as a white-coded, racialized, cisgender woman; my father is from Afghanistan and my mother is a Scottish-Canadian settler. My journey in education started out many years ago when I began volunteering at my old elementary school. I had completed my undergraduate degree and had two young children; I had thought about being a teacher but was not sure if it was for me. I took a position as a lunchroom supervisor shortly after I began volunteering. I enjoyed being in the classroom in a K-8 school; I would stay late sometimes after my shift was over just to observe and volunteer and see what teaching was all about. I enrolled in Sheridan College's Early Childhood Education program and, since I already had a degree, I was able to fast-track the program and apply to teacher's college the following year (as I had already missed the application deadline for the current year). My plans fell into place; I became an ECE and received admission to York University's Bachelor of Education program in the Primary and Junior divisions. I thoroughly loved teacher's college in particular, as I had wonderful professors who exposed me to a wealth of ideas. I could not get enough of the education program and continued my journey to complete my Master of Education degree. I was put on the Toronto District School Board (TDSB) ECE supply list while in teachers' college and began to supply immediately while working through my master's degree. After completing my master's, I felt content. With the degree, I knew that I could become an administrator down the road and I was offered an interview for a full-time permanent position as a Designated Early Childhood Educator (DECE) at the Peel District School Board. Being a single parent at the time, it was an offer I could not turn down. I got the job.

I started my job as an RECE in the FDK program in 2014, the very first year that the province introduced the program. My oldest daughter was also coincidentally starting FDK as well. While working with my teaching partner, I noticed the divide in status, working conditions, and pay. Although my education and qualifications exceeded that of my OCT teaching partner (I was also an OCT), she made twice as much as I did and had an hour of paid lunch a day, in addition to one or two planning periods each day. I was offered no planning time, nor input on report cards or any assessments. I also had limited contribution to curriculum implementation. I had a half-hour of unpaid lunch, which was always held up while waiting for the lunchroom supervisor to come to the classroom, or by a situation that had escalated such that I could not leave for my lunch on time. In the afternoons I was meant to receive a fifteen-minute break, which I seldom received. I decided to apply to the Peel Occasional Teacher (OT) roster and was successful.

Following my full year as an ECE, I transitioned to the role of an OT and was admitted to OISE/University of Toronto for my doctorate. Throughout my doctoral work I completed OT and Long Term Occasional Teacher (LTO) positions and moved up to get on the LTO list. During my final year of doctoral work, I began teaching in higher education at Ryerson University's School of Early Childhood Studies, Western's Faculty of Education, and the Ontario Teacher Education program at Niagara University. While working as a sessional faculty member at these institutions, I could not help but notice the various parallels between my time as an ECE and my position as a sessional lecturer. I began to jot down my ideas. First, I made the connection between the two in terms of pay: sessional lecturers are paid on a per-course basis, in opposition to tenured faculty who are paid salaries; ECEs similarly are paid per hour rather than by annual salary (as teachers are paid); ECEs are not paid over the summer months, while teachers are; ECE jobs are not secure and are dependent on enrolment, as in the case of sessional faculty, whilst teachers are permanent, as are the tenured professoriate. Second, I noted that sessional faculty are left out of departmental meetings and planning committees, just as ECEs are left out of most assessment and programming decisions made by teachers. Finally, in addition to the two-tiered system of status and prestige sessional faculty and ECEs experience in relation to their tenured and teacher counterparts, there are increasing expectations of both workers. Sessional faculty are paid significantly less for increasing teaching loads and responsibilities such as meeting with students and mentoring with limited space; many sessionals operate out of one office. ECEs are expected to complete more work and professional duties, such as Continuous Professional Learning, to maintain their RECE membership, although this workload does not lead to greater pay or status. It was effectively these parallels that sparked my interest in analyzing the similarities of these two types of education work that are both heavily situated along racialized and gendered power relations. The instability of sessional contract work was too much of a strain on my family life, so I decided to return to the board and I currently teach Grade 7.

Rachel Berman
During the time I was working on my dissertation at a university in Ontario in the 1990s, I had a baby and began teaching on contract at a number of different institutions. My doctoral committee didn't like either of those additions to my life, as they believed they both took me away from completing my dissertation in a timely manner. However, I wanted to have a child and I also believed I would never land a full-time job in academia with no teaching experience other than having worked as a teaching assistant who graded papers. Unable to afford childcare except one day a week, my mother and mother-in-law stepped in to care for their grandchild one day a week each. On the weekends, my former partner took on solo parenting duty. Thus, as my child turned one, I had 4-5 days a week to engage in studies and work. I became an "itinerant scholar," a term someone mentioned to me in the 1990s for sessionals who taught at multiple institutions. I felt my prospects for full-time work were rather grim as I had heard stories of PhDs at the time, particularly in the humanities, not landing tenure track positions, and would often "joke" that the only questions I'd be asking after I graduated would be if people wanted fries with their burger. I held contract teaching positions at McMaster in Hamilton, Ontario, York University in the former North York, and Ryerson University in the middle of downtown Toronto, as well as an outpost of Georgian College in Shelburne, Ontario.

Shortly after completing my dissertation, I was interviewed and hired into a tenure track position at Ryerson University, into a department where I had not been a contract faculty member. Apparently there had been 25 applications submitted to the department, a department that had not done much tenure track hiring in a long time (and indeed Ryerson University still has one of the worst faculty-to-student ratios in the province of Ontario). My partner at the time was only trained to work in Ontario and after we separated some years later I could not, given our custody arrangement, work outside the city. So, I was very fortunate to be hired into a tenure track position and into such a position in Toronto. When I chaired our

department's hiring committee recently, we received well over 80 applications for one tenure track position and interviewed many qualified people. I was also part of the full-time faculty negotiation team that engaged in collective bargaining with the university administration, and have seen first-hand that faculty associations and the myriad of unions connected to the PSE sector must work together if we hope to change the material conditions of precarious faculty members. I met Zuhra Abawi, the first author of this paper, when we became acquainted after I visited her class for a teaching assessment while she was teaching in the department on contract. I met Alana Powell, the third author of this paper, while she was an MA student in the program where I serve as Director.

Alana Powell
As a proud ECE, I was thrilled to accept my first position at a non-profit community-based childcare centre in Toronto. In fact, I (a privileged white, cis woman and settler in Ontario) felt incredibly grateful to be offered what is considered a high salary (given, of course, the context of the ECEC sector). Despite being thoroughly aware of the challenges ECEs faced with remuneration, I thought perhaps this might be a liveable wage. Perhaps, even, I could leave my part-time bar job. This, however, was certainly not the case. While I can sincerely say "I was one of the lucky ones," I continued to hold a part-time job, working weekends and evenings to ensure that I could make ends meet and pay back student loans, and yet I could still not save or plan for my future. Despite this, I worked (hard) and gave my program, the families, and my community my best.

Over time, I began to recognize the depth to which ECEs are undervalued, the grave implications this has on women, the early-years workforce, children, families, society, and the incredible injustice that occurs each day this system continues. I saw racialized women exploited in low-paying temporary positions, unable to access the benefits associated with full-time salaried positions. I saw how our supervisor struggled to balance parent fees and wages, while families were often unaware of the precarity the staff faced. I saw my colleagues purchase materials out of pocket and work on the weekends. I stayed after hours to finish documentation. I created materials for our program on the weekends. I worked on curriculum through my lunch break. Yet, I was still the "lucky one" who had access to health benefits, paid sick days, and professional development. As a result of my noticing and attending to the unjust system, I left my coveted position and returned to school to complete my MA. I hope(d) to contribute to efforts to disrupt the neoliberal context that positions care work as an individual/private/women's responsibility.

While working towards my MA, I was in an incredibly privileged position to accept work as a contract/sessional lecturer at an Ontario college in an ECE diploma program. I thought, and continue to think, that post-secondary faculty are valuable educators, who are uniquely positioned to support (in this case) predominantly young women as they transition into the workforce. As well, it was my perhaps naïve perspective that post-secondary educators were appropriately compensated for their work. While this is arguably truer for full-time faculty, as a contract lecturer I found the precarity and devaluation shocking and oddly similar to my experience as an ECE. I continued to work on weekends and evenings—for example, grading papers, responding to student emails, preparing for lectures. It was explained to me that planning time was accounted for in my hourly wage, which paid me exclusively for the hours I lectured. However, in no way was this sufficient given the frequency and amount of work that occurred outside of the classroom. Beyond remuneration, there were certain other challenges I faced as a contract lecturer, for example, inconsistent access to space to meet with students, no paid office hours, limited storage space on campus, covering the cost of Microsoft Word and other software programs independently, and lack of access to professional learning and important meetings. Overcoming these challenges to ensure I was providing my students the most meaningful learning required my independent problem-solving and creativity, with a general lack of institutional support.[1]

The very serious problem here, so eerily similar to my experience as an ECE, is that it was me and my students who were affected by these constraints. The neoliberal context that entrenches larger class sizes, notions of efficiency, and precarity in employment ultimately means that individual employees must tighten their bootstraps and just "work harder" (for less). Students, and children, are then relying upon overworked, undervalued, and underappreciated educators who continue to try to provide the space, time, and relationships within which we know learning occurs. As our economic and education systems continue to shift deeper into a neoliberal approach, space, time, relationships, and value shift further into the distance and educators further into precarity. It is unacceptable to continue to ask individual educators to do more with less. Education from the margins creates a future that is marginal at best.

Discussion and Conclusion

Social public goods, such as affordable and high-quality ECEC and PSE, have been diluted and ultimately eroded by the marketization of neoliberalism. As state responsibilities continue to be offloaded from the state to the individual, Ontario and Canada's claims to be a social-welfare society can no longer be substantiated. Record-high childcare and tuition costs in Ontario, in conjunction with the normalization of precarious employment, not only limited to sessional faculty and ECEs but to the general population as well, are ways in which we see the neoliberal approach influencing individual's well-being and social sustainability. Increasingly, Ontarians are finding themselves trapped in precarious or non-standard contract and temporary work with low pay while servicing higher student loan payments and childcare fees (OECD 2017). According to an Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) 2017 report, employment quality in Canada is at a 25-year low. The report specifically drew attention to Southern Ontario workers, noting that less than half of working adults have full-time, permanent jobs (OECD 2017).

Employment precarity does not affect all Ontarians equally, as racialized people, particularly racialized women, fare the worst in the labour force. Ontario PSE and ECEC are no exception to this rule. While universities across the province have drafted equity policies to address discrepancies between predominantly white, male, tenure-track professors and marginalized faculty, the general unwillingness of departments to collect faculty demographic data has rendered the majority of these policies redundant (Abawi 2018; Sensoy & DiAngelo 2017). Moreover, universities continue to operate as neutral spaces whereby racism ceases to exist; this denial increasingly oppresses racialized and Indigenous faculty by glossing over lived experiences (Ahmed 2012; Henry et al. 2017). Common perceptions of sessional faculty, including the myth that they are on contract by choice while working as full-time professionals, are patently untrue. As Foster and Birdsell-Bauer (2018) point out, more than half of sessional faculty are aspiring to a tenure-track position.

The lack of purposeful data collection in the ECEC sector and in PSE is an ongoing concern, as it restricts the possibility of illustrating the current context and helping illuminate a path forward. The Child Care Human Resources Sector Council, which had started to make some progress in this regard, lost its core funding due to changes made by Stephen Harper's Conservative government in 2013 and was dissolved. For equity policies to materialize, it is critical for Ontario universities to make available more detailed data-based reports that outline data collection processes and methodology. While there has been some progress made by universities in terms of their commitment to data collection, most notably the partnership between Statistics Canada and university and college academic staff system, universities continue to be divided by faculty and managers, and further divided between tenure-track and sessional faculty (Abawi 2018; Foster & Birdsell-Bauer 2018). Despite increasing national interest in the early years, there continues to be a "'data drought," especially pertaining to the workforce. ECEC sectoral data collection is negligent and fragmented and in no way addresses the

precarity and marginalization experienced by the (predominantly female) workforce. While anecdotal claims are made about the racialization of low paying jobs in the sector, Ontarians lack the evidence to substantiate these claims and adequately begin to address the systemic racism that contributes to the current situation.

While we have highlighted the grim reality throughout this paper, it is important, in keeping with a FPE approach, to also acknowledge the power of educators who are pushing back against encroaching neoliberal thinking. Numerous faculty strikes have transpired across Ontario campuses, most notably the three-and-a-half-month strike at York University in 2018. The Canadian Association of University Teachers launched their 12th Fair Employment Week in October 2019 to raise awareness both on and off campuses of the challenges faced by contract faculty. These acts of solidarity and collectivity are essential to resisting further marketization of universities and the disjointing of academic freedoms. Without allyship between tenure-track and sessional faculty, however, these acts remain limited (Betensky 2017; Hearn 2010). The ECEC sector is also becoming increasingly active. Led by the AECEO, ECEs across Ontario are taking on leadership roles in political action through the Decent Work and Professional Pay campaign. What is most critical in this work is that the voices of ECEs are at the centre; it is the marginalized themselves who are highlighting the inequities and suggesting a path forward. It will continue to be essential that those who are most affected by precarity are guiding the movement against it. Similar to post-secondary educators, allyship is critical, as ECEs seek the support of OCTs, administrators, community members, and, most significantly, parents in order to persuade change at the policy and funding level. Beyond their inherit value, both OCTs and ECEs are critical for social reproduction and the success of Ontario's future wellbeing. To care for and educate citizens well, Ontario requires educators who are valued, diverse, well-compensated, and able to access decent work. We must move away from a market approach to education and create space and time for educators in the PSE and ECEC sectors to engage, be present, and create learning with children and adults that ensure our population is cared for.

Endnotes

1. It is very important that I acknowledge the support I received from my colleagues throughout this experience. Despite institutional constraints, individual colleagues were quick to respond with support, guidance, and assurance. In no way do I mean to devalue their individual contributions to my success and well-being.

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Stories We Live and Grow By: (Re)Telling Our Experiences as Muslim Mothers and Daughters

Shirin Khayambashi is a sessional professor and a PhD Candidate in Sociology from McMaster University. She is expecting to defend her thesis in December 2019. She is a qualitative researcher who specializes in Diaspora studies and hybrid identity development. Her article "Diaspora, Identity and Store Signs" was recently published in the *Journal of Visual Studies*. She has further presented her research in a variety of Canadian and American conferences. Her PhD dissertation focuses on the flag debate among the Iranian diaspora. Through her research, she challenges the concept of diasporic cohesion, and questions the issues confronted by minority members of a diasporic community.

Book under review: Saleh, Muna. 2019. *Stories We Live and Grow By: (Re)Telling Our experiences as Muslim Mothers and Daughters*. Ontario, Canada: Demeter Press.

In Stories We Live and Grow By, Muna Saleh explores the generational re-rooting of the complex and diverse Muslim diaspora through multi-perspective narrative inquiries. She traces and links the Muslim mother and daughter experience, which connects the ancestral past to future generations. As an education scholar, Saleh examines the Muslim daughter's experience with adolescence in the home and school, along with their mother's journey from childhood to motherhood. Saleh argues for the coexistence of school and home in creating a strong educational curriculum which facilitates the healthy development of young Muslim girls. Her analysis includes the interconnection of the cisgender Muslim woman's experience in the religiously, regionally, and racially diverse Muslim diaspora. Saleh indicates that the growing hatred towards the unidimensional image of Muslim women under hijab post 9/11 disrupts the identity development of young Muslim girls. Therefore, the school curriculum must connect home and school by reflecting on Muslim identity to help young Muslim girls to flourish beyond stereotypes and segregating social norms.

Saleh draws upon her experience as a second-generation Muslim woman from a Palestinian and Lebanese background living in Edmonton, Alberta. She travels down her female genealogy to reconstruct her experience in Canada. Due to her familial experience with dislocation and destruction of the original homeland, Saleh indicates the significance of spatiality in the re-rooting of each diasporic community. Through her personal narrative, she argues for the importance of the home as a location for the cultivation of future generations. Through narrative inquiries, Saleh explores the intergenerational relationship of three pairs of cis-gender mothers and daughters to comprehend their delicate balancing act among the home, school, media, and the general public.

As part of the narrative inquiry, Saleh intimately participates in the lives of her co-inquirers. The narrative inquiry includes constant self-reflection and self-evaluation about her own experience with the participants. There is merit to this approach. Through repetition and self-evaluation in each sub-section, she explores different angles of the same narrative, which indicates the complexity of each personal account. The methodology explores the "stories [she] lives by, with, and in"(12). The self-reflection and retelling expose the reader to "embodied experiential knowledge" of each narrative (251).

Through examination of the lives of her co-inquirers, Saleh challenges the contemporary Muslim discourse, which includes the stereotypical image of an exotic and victimized Muslim woman forced under the hijab. Saleh revisits the cultural and ideological aspects of Islam, along with the orientalized discourse of war-on-terror, to investigate the identity development of the young Muslim women in North American societies. For instance, with ongoing restrictive laws, such as the current niqab ban in Quebec, the government gradually normalizes Islamophobia through a hegemonic attack on the hijab. For all Muslim women, whether or not to don the hijab is a personal choice relating to their religious and spiritual beliefs. Saleh poetically describes each woman reminiscing about their challenges, or jihad, relating to choosing to don the hijab or not. While suggesting a personal dilemma about wearing the hijab, Saleh refers to the current political climate and states that Canadian Muslim women are aware that donning the hijab makes them vulnerable and visible in Canadian societies (113). Simultaneously, the Western obsession with, and yet oversimplification of, the hijab silences those who encounter abusive family and unconsented hijab. In Western societies, these women's experiences are rendered invisible in fear of betraying their community. These women are unable to communicate their spiritual crises, as they avoid the labels given to the Muslim community. Saleh critically explores the experiences of Muslim women with their hijab, and she stresses that the hijab is a personal choice between a woman and her Allah.

Through her interactions with her co-inquirers, Saleh criticizes the ingroup contestation, racism, and sexism among the Muslim diaspora. Due to the diversity of Muslim identity, minority status Muslim women encounter racial and gender discrimination by their Muslim community, which leads to ingroup isolation and segregation (241). She argues that the experience of Muslim women is more than their hijab. In school, the community centres, and even among family, women are subjected to criticism by their community regarding the way they practice their religion and culture. Saleh demonstrates how each mother and daughter experience misogyny and racial discrimination in their community and how each employs innovative modes of resistance and rebellion without breaking socio-cultural norms. Each mother and daughter deal separately with the culture of patriarchy in their diaspora, and the Canadian general public, in ways which are both innovative and liberating. Therefore, creative and continuing mothering is necessary for the daughters to grow into independent adults with well-developed identities and strong senses of self.

While Saleh critically explores the experience of Muslim women in Canada, her research lacks intersectionality. Saleh unpacks ingroup and outgroup racism and sexism, but she leaves class, gender, and sexuality unexplored. First, her analysis is devoid of any socio-economic data. Other than a small description of warm homes and abundance of cultural treats, Saleh does not disclose each participant's socio-economic class. It is assumptive that all Muslim women share similar socio-economic class, and all have the leisure to have a proper home/school balance for their children. The socio-economic class of each family indicates their social access and their ability to be involved with their children's schooling. Would all Muslim mothers have similar leisure?

Second, the heteronormality of Saleh's analysis is not representative of the Muslim diaspora. Since Saleh solely focuses on binary cis-gender equality, she limits the scope of her research. For instance, when parents disapprove of mixed-gender parties, Saleh rationalizes

their action by using a gender binary perspective, indicating both girls and boys are discouraged from attending. While discussion about the parties could be an appropriate premise to discuss the young girls' gender and sexual identity, Saleh rationalizes it maternally. The assumption of gender and sexual identity of the young Muslim participants avoids the questions surrounding the sexuality and gender identity of these young adults. The heteronormativity of this research limits the intersectional analysis of the findings.

While this book is a compelling exploration of Muslim women experience in Canada, lack of gender/sexual identity and class hierarchy renders the analysis incomplete.

The Ethics and Politics of Breastfeeding: Power, Pleasure, Poetics

Cristina Díaz Pérez is a predoctoral researcher at the University of Oviedo. Her research focuses on the history of sexuality; English literature; sex manuals; and sexuality and pregnancy.

"The art of breastfeeding can take many forms" (186).

While breastfeeding has been traditionally depicted in the prescriptive behaviour of handbooks and health guides, in *The Ethics and Politics of Breastfeeding*, Robyn Lee conceives it as an ongoing and creative process. In this monograph, Lee moves away from prevalent discussions of breastfeeding versus formula feeding to provide a thorough analysis of the current political, cultural, and social status of breastfeeding while also providing a feminist approach to breastfeeding studies that assesses radical and artistic breastfeeding practices. The book presents a rethinking of nursing based on theoretical grounds to propose a new ethics of breastfeeding that challenges systems that oppress on the basis of gender, race, and/or socioeconomic conditions.

The subtitle, *Power, Pleasure, Poetics*, highlights different aspects of the debate that Lee examines. The author departs from notions of power contained within the two dominant discourses on breastfeeding—the maternal and the medical—to acknowledge the current status of breastfeeding politics embedded within neoliberal politics. The book assesses biopower to analyze the medicalization of breastfeeding through constant advice in governmental health guides, but Lee also highlights the isolation and challenges of subjects who breastfeed. In addition, Lee considers how a strictly maternal approach reifies the "naturalness" of breastfeeding, thus maintaining gender binaries and notion of mothers as the only breastfeeding subjects. Noting the failure of governmental policies and society as a whole to address "the broader social factors that impede breastfeeding," (67) mainly due to lack of support and initiatives to promote breastfeeding in all social strands, Lee proposes her own theory.

The theoretical background to Lee's ethics of breast-feeding is framed within the works of Michael Foucault, Emmanuel Levinas, Luce Irigaray and, to a lesser extent, Donna Haraway. Pleasure is conceived as an alternative to the sexualization of breastfeeding, suggesting that all breastfeeding subjects have the potential to experience it. Following Foucault, Lee advises that the ethical self is capable of experiencing pleasure and being a flexible force of creative transformation. In addition, in keeping with Levinas, Lee states that the social dimension of breastfeeding, which poses all subjects as responsible for feeding the hungry other, is a dimension that can address the isolation of breastfeeding subjects. Irigaray supports Lee's ethics of breastfeeding by stating how different possibilities, such as induced lactation, can have subversive potentiality in opposition to dominant discourses. Throughout the book, Lee emphasizes that language is determinant in constructing a new ethics of breastfeeding. In this regard, she acknowledges the contribution of Foucault, Levinas, and Irigaray and their use of words and poiesis. Given the controversies around some of these works, however, especially regarding Levinas, I do question if these are the best theorists to back up the ethics Lee proposes.

On the other hand, Lee also takes a feminist approach in her use of language and subjectivities. Mothers seem the sole focus of recognition as breastfeeding subjects in traditional approaches to breastfeeding, but Lee acknowledges the different possibilities in terms of bodies and entities that can feed babies. Lee shows an extensive knowledge of current debates on breastfeeding and combines these with a feminist approach to social issues in order to create her *Poetics*. Lee achieves her initial purpose of building her ethics and poetics of breastfeeding as supported by radical and artistic performances and projects such as milk banks, induced lactation, *The Lactation Station* or *The Lady Cheese Shop*. Delving into art provides Lee the grounds to speak not only of a theory but of a way to live and understand breastfeeding that moves away from maternal and medical discourses. This is the most significant accomplishment of the book.

Another of Lee's achievements is her departing from the locality of the Canadian situation in her analysis of breastfeeding to foster a theory that can be employed in further discussions of nursing. She assesses the dominant roles of La Leche League and the Canadian health system in prescribing behaviour. This discussion may be thought-provoking for audiences as it can lead them to acknowledge the dominant structures of their own geographical locations, thus fostering construction of a new ethics and politics of breastfeeding that Lee promotes in her overall discussion.

The *Ethics and Politics of Breastfeeding: Power, Pleasure, Poetics* proposes a new perspective on breastfeeding studies, but also contributes to cultural and sociological studies. The book not only enables academics and non-academics to broaden their awareness of issues around nursing, but can also be interpreted as a political manifesto that attempts to subvert the risks, privileges, and pressures that surround breastfeeding. Art is constructed as the means to achieve the new discourse on breastfeeding but it is also a goal in itself, since Lee considers breastfeeding an art that is framed within particular social and cultural contexts. As such, Robyn Lee builds a poetics while she constructs herself as a leading expert on breastfeeding.

Literary Work

Draw(her)

Quand la glace fracasse tes murs intérieurs
Tumbling goes to the surface
Je suis riche de toi
De ton regard

You reap these seeds,
Breathe in this moment
Breathing that rodent
Flame
Crossing your heart like a frozen
Stream crosses the glace bay
Stuck yet
Free from the warmth that once was
Surely more mobile than this once was
Give me the space to discover you
Among the stars constellating on your
Freckles
The glare in.
Your eyes
Why would you be checking the weather
Mid-mountain
With what reception?
Ivy's wonder
Ivies wander
Through the looking glass that is
Ruminations on what once was
Done.

Fini de ta vie
de ta mémoire
De tes mémoires
Fleeting thoughts of you
Thinking
Smiling
Tapping your red nails on the kitchen countertop
Where is that plate again
Stored. Porcelain. Fragile.
Closeted.

Open that drawer that can't be
Slammed shut
Too many things
So many thoughts
A little effort
Might be a puzzle
Not that one
This one
Once more. Frustrated.

Close it now and open it again
Forgot the sharpener
You never know
Quand il sera temps
D'aiguiser tes pensées
Et de te retrouver
Dans ma mémoire
Ouverte à tes paroles nuancées
Déja effacées
par l'air du temps.

Amélie Lemieux is Assistant Professor of Literacies at Mount Saint Vincent University's Faculty of Education in Halifax, Canada. Her research interests include digitally-informed and arts-based literacy learning, maker education, and mapping methodologies. Her poetry has been published in *Art/Research International*, and in arts-based publications that call upon the felt, the aesthetic, and emergent senses.

Trauma as "the bedrock of hysteria"

i am teaching my body you are not a threat
not every man is a minefield
i must be wary of
balancing on a ledge with my delirium
the way the moon dips its toes into the pale blue

i am unsure who taught me
to medicalize the violence
with its starving, sticky tendrils
around my tendons
i know when trauma blooms inside me and my blood boils
you do not degrade me
for not being saccharine

i am done being the sacramental bread
for the dull teeth of men
who are half eulogy
who cannot keep themselves full

i am working on integrating the fractured parts of me
howl
caught in my throat
mouth full of cherry laughter
my body as a vessel for shame
and solace
and thrills

i am more than coral skin
and accidents

i am a vastness

Ellie Lamothe is a sociology student at Mount Saint Vincent University, an activist, a poet, and the founding editor of *Laurels & Bells Literary Journal*. She's passionate about feminism, collective healing, and working to end gender-based violence. Her poetry has appeared in *Glass: A Journal of Poetry* (Poets Resist), *Yes Poetry*, and *Ghost City Review*.

Why I Left My Book Club

I left my book club because I could no longer
hide behind the wide clear layers of privilege.
I no longer wanted to see the feigned ignorance of arched eyebrows
or hear nervous giggles when topics brushed past vanilla courtyards.
These women do not really want to know what I think.
Instead, they tell me to have a glass of wine and relax,
as if that would make me Dorothy:
three clicks of my ruby shoes and suddenly I am on the dirt road to oblivion.
No, I would rather be Red Riding Hood
who has found her way in the dense forest and has slain the big bad wolves—
turned those beasts into a new overcoat of her own choosing.

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