The depth of the urban palimpsest: encountering sense(s) of place(s) in urban imaginaries from Little Jamaica to Quayside and Re-Sistering

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Abstract

In this thesis the concept of sense of place is taken up to engage in deeper conversations about the processes, emotions and affects that are part of the urban imaginaries we create. It asks what role sense(s) of place(s) can play in forming these imaginations. The aims of the research thus focus on two parts: first, it reflects critically on the theory that exists around sense of place and brings it into conversation with non-'Western' epistemologies to arrive at sense(s) of place(s) that integrate elements from both contexts. Second, the analysis brings the cases into the discussion to follow where these analyses might take us to consider what urban imaginaries make up the layers of Toronto's palimpsest. Along the way it picks up concepts of more-than-human entanglements and sensing practices, relations of reciprocity or care and considerations of displacement as well as attachment in place.

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1. Introduction

> "It is an honour. I have a great passion for this city, in its multiplicity it is constantly rich and surprising. I've written this about it in *thirsty* – that wild waiting at traffic lights off the end of the world, where nothing is simple, nothing, in the city there is no simple love or simple fidelity, the heart is slippery."
>
> (Toronto's Third Poet Laureate, Dionne Brand, 2009-2012).

In her statement for her appointment as poet laureate for the city of Toronto in 2009 Dionne Brand highlights two elements taken into account for this thesis. First, she acknowledges the diverse nature of the city and not by using the word 'multicultural' that Toronto very often is paired with. Rather than adhering to the image of Toronto as the most multicultural city (as urban legend would source it from the United Nations (Doucet, 2004)), Brand uses 'multiplicity' to characterize Toronto. While perhaps Toronto might seem as a coherent entity, a bounded and clear object of poetry or of study, the city should not need to be presented as a singularity. Nor, for that matter, would it be possible to do so for other cities. Neil Brenner and Christian Schmid (2015) observed that the idea that there is such a thing as a "singular, encompassing rubric of 'cityness' is no longer useful as "the" city 'has become more differentiated, polymorphic, variegated and multiscalar' (p. 152). While this understanding has been pervasive it leaves the question if this limited category of what a city was or is, has been useful in the past either. Relating this question not only to the urban, but space and geography in general Doreen Massey has long advocated for multiplicity to be one of the propositions to consider space and fosters its 'throwntogetherness' (Massey, 2000; 2005). In both Massey's (2005) and Brenner and Schmid's (2015) work globalization and its generally thought of homogenizing or universalizing tendencies have been set aside to prefer the idea that time-space compression make for more

complex worlds and require reflection on the ways we approach the concepts and objects related to the city and to space in academia.

Lewis Mumford already wrote that ‘layer upon layer, past times preserve themselves’ in the urban landscape (1938/1970: p. 7). This layered imagination of space relates closely to a concept that has stuck in describing urban space: the palimpsest. This literary metaphor describes the overlaying of text or image on top of something that has already been written. It not only emphasizes the multiplicity mentioned before, but also highlights the process of preservation, erasure and change at work. André Corboz (1983) wrote of the land as palimpsest in disregard of the concept of tabula rasa. In its uniqueness the land is “charged with traces and past readings” and “man does not simply add to these layers” but people also erase them, and some layers are “willfully done away with” (p. 33). Thus, changes to the palimpsest are not neutral, but can be intentional and perhaps often are. Even more importantly in many instances the newer layers do not cover entirely what has been written before. As certain layers are thin or have holes, lacunae (or “palimpsestic glimpses”) can still be glimpsed and as such the palimpsest not only consists of the intentionally preserved, but also of what still can be seen through the cracks (Corboz, 1983: Huyssen, 2003: Haritaworn, Moussa & Ware, 2018). It also enables for a more in-depth reflection on the production of space such as Henri Lefebvre (1991) famously described and the power dynamics at play. Who are the people that can choose to erase layers of the palimpsestic city and whose contributions are overwritten? How do such multiple imaginations of space come into conflict with one another? Lefebvre’s trialectic of space as conceived, lived and perceived (respectively the structures of power; the desires of dwellers; and the way space is actually used) provides a framework to think through these concerns (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 1993). Moreover, it is an introduction into the question of the right to the city as argued by Lefebvre

(1986/1996) which has been further developed by many others as ‘always already intersecting with racial, economic, gender, and disability justice’ (Haritaworn, Moussa & Ware, 2018, p. 14).

While on the one hand a powerful trope that derives from geological stratification, it is also a literary metaphor. To think of the city as text or using methods of analysis that relate closely to literary practices comes back regularly in urban studies, but perhaps most famously in Michel De Certau’s *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) in which spatial narratives and acts of reading and writing are used to describe experiences in the city. The palimpsest which Andreas Huyssen presented as “inherently literary” fits in well with this kind of approach (2003: p. 7). However, Huyssen also states that this trope does not have to simply make the buildings, the landscape and the city into text (Ibid.). Thus, not conceiving of the urban space as yet another surface (as Doreen Massey would most likely argue against), but through heightened awareness of its materiality and literary techniques, it further delves into the conversation between imaginaries and understandings of the city (Huyssen, 2003).

The words from Dionne Brand about this city however did not only discuss the complexity of Toronto in terms of its multiplicity, but also in that of the “slippery heart”, of relations. Considering the many layers of Toronto, it would thus also involve engaging with the networks of relations between people and things. Perhaps the love spoken of here speaks as much about the connection between Toronto and its people. It brings questions of attachment to place and the love for that place to the fore. Gaston Bachelard brings up this topophilia in *The Poetics of Space* (1958/1994) where he talks of the interrelations of the inner and outer spaces, ‘of mind and world’, as being formed by and influencing one another (Malpas, 1999, p. 5). Similarly, Yi-Fu Tuan (1974) introduced topophilia in his work as ‘the affective bond between people and place or setting’ and explores delight, pleasure and joy in his book *Topophilia: A*

Study of Environmental Perception, Attitudes, and Values (p. 4). These notions are closely related to the concepts of place-making, place attachment or identity, and more importantly for this thesis, sense of place. Continuing along the line of bonds and relations between people and places, sense of place provides one perspective, or perhaps on another note presents the potential for multiplicity if a variety of senses of places are considered.

The focus on relations, but also on emotions and affect are components that do not necessarily take center stage in conceptions of the city as palimpsest, even if it deals with identity, memory and complexity. Nor is for that matter a sense of care integrated into it, although a concept like 'palimpsestic preservation' might indicate such an approach (Kroessler, 2015). Care, which similar to Bachelard's thoughts on spatial relations, can be "theorized as an affective connective tissue between an inner self and an outer world" that "constitutes a feeling with, rather than a feeling for, others" (Hobart & Kneese, 2020). If it is acknowledged that the maintenance of the palimpsest and the changes it goes through are not neutral, and considering practices of preservation, it would be appropriate to think and act care-fully. Processes of gentrification and other urban development rapidly change the urban landscape and can thus quickly alter the palimpsest, sometimes in irreversible ways (Corboz, 1983; Kroessler, 2015). Therefore, it is urgent to not only pay attention to these changes, but to think more about the systems of power working actively on and between these layers. It moreover asks for critical reflection on our own response-ability (Haraway, 2008).

These conversations around multiplicity, affective geographies and components of care are central to this thesis. To avoid presenting space as another surface (Massey, 2000), to reducing it into text, this thesis does not aim to 'read' the city. Rather it seeks to think about and through the layered imagination of urban landscapes in an attempt to include affectivity and care.

Nigel Thrift (2007) presented cities as “roiling maelstroms of affect” and emphasized that a failure to acknowledge affect in these contexts is ‘criminal neglect’ (p. 171). The question of what affective components or attunements might add to an understanding of the complex and layered cityscapes and its imaginaries is taken up by exploring more closely the concept of ‘sense of place’. To set up this conceptual framework the thesis will break down both aspects – sense and place – to bring them together in relation to case studies in Toronto. It writes about the concept as extending beyond the intent to find measurable elements of sense of place, to steer away from meaning-making and the imposing of value on place from certain actors, to think of it in its multiplicity and affective qualities and to include a component of care. It imagines the potential of sense(s) of place(s).

The entanglements that this research gets caught up in stem from different disciplines and do not necessarily follow threads from its ‘origins’, nor does it provide an encompassing view on these fields. Rather, it takes up along the way the knots that knot, ties that tie with the intention of reinforcing what Donna Haraway (2016) emphasize by writing that “it matters what matters we use to think other matters with” and “it matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories” (p. 12). It is thus not only aimed at attuning to different understandings or imaginaries of the city, but also to reflect on the practices of planning, research and writing and on the institutions within which these processes take place.

The case studies in question are located in Toronto. The first is the neighborhood of Eglinton West, where a strong Jamaican community is active in demanding more careful consideration of their needs and wants for the area while the city mostly invests and slowly constructs the LRT expansion. The second is Quayside at the Toronto waterfront which after much turmoil surrounding the proposed expansive plans of Google to transform the site into

Sidewalk Labs' smart city vision now lays uncertain in what will happen next after Google cancelled their attempt at city planning. Last, but not least, is a small area along Niwa'ah Onega'gaih'ih, Kobechenonk or so-called Humber river which generally is covered in leisure and green spaces, some public and a lot private in the form of multiple golf courses and the like. In between grows a Three Sisters garden in the Etienne Brulé Park.

All three of these cases where big changes have happened, are happening and will still happen, show communities actively responding to these often rapid transformations, the imposed plans from city government or other actors. In each 'strong marks of present space merge in the imaginary with traces of the past, erasures, losses and heterotopias' through a poetry project, a masterplan, cultural mapping research, activism or in the actual building of (social) infrastructure on the ground (Hessen, 2003: p. 7). They might be the glimpses in the palimpsest of a Toronto that is dominated by layers obscuring certain histories and communities, for example those of queer and/or Black, Indigenous and People of Color (Haritaworn, Moussa & Ware, 2018). Such erasures and losses are as much part of the concept of the palimpsest, in the way that sense of place should not only consider place attachment and place-making, but also the displacement happening simultaneously and what expressions of placelessness might emerge (Relph, 1976; Windsor & McVey, 2005). While sense of place can be constructive for place identity, for communities and individuals, and potentially the environment (Raymond et al., 2017; Verbrugge et al., 2019; Walker & Moscardo, 2016), it should also open up conversations about the lack thereof and the active negation of sense of place for certain communities. The overarching question that this thesis thus concerns itself with is: what role sense(s) of place(s) might play in the layered imagination of the city? While the cases are discussed in their singularity and locality, they are also brought together to consider in what ways urban imaginaries express these

senses of places and how they compose imaginations of a future Toronto with (or without) care.

Although some research around sense of place is often done through interviews or questionnaires (Stedman, 2003; Mulvaney et al., 2020) and many attempts at making models for such research have been developed (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018; Raymond et al., 2017), this thesis will more abstractly think through sense of place. It takes into account the perspectives from different actors by using sources that range from a masterplan to a community led poetry project, from an approach to growing corn, squash and beans to public consultation sessions. The aim is not to make sense of place. Nor is it to focus on value and meaning attributed solely through linguistic practices. The sense of place I am concerned with relies on senses and sensing practices that are attuned to the potential of these spaces and the idea that "there is more there" (Thrift, 2007: p. 189). The thesis in itself should be a practice in (at)tending to these cases. Rather than using them as fixed objects it wonders where the cases at the center of this work "might go and what potential modes of knowing, relating, and attending to things are already somehow present in them as a potential or resonance" (Stewart, 2008: p. 73).

2. Research Practice and Approaches

To appropriately address the city's entangled-ness, the layers at play and the affective geographies formed with and within, this research approaches that work by focusing on three different case studies. While it does not look at Toronto from a macro-scale but engages in conversations on the micro-scale and takes into account the particularities of each case, this thesis does not consider the three locations as bounded objects of study. They are thought and presented to be connected with the rest of the city and beyond. This thesis will present a way to connect theory and thinking with the ways that spaces are experienced and (re)made, materially or imaginatively. Rather than sticking with one meaning or place making process the simultaneity and multiplicity of the city will be studied and inform the research process to present a sliver or fragment to tie into our understanding of Toronto and other urban places.

Changing Contexts

If the city can indeed be understood as 'always-in-progress' or constantly changing and if it is acknowledged that place is dynamic, the places interacted with in this thesis will not be the same places that can be encountered once this thesis has been written. These dynamic cities, but also any kind of cultural object that might be at the center of a research, should not be reduced to stable and static objects of study. In *Too Soon, Too Late* (1998), Meaghan Morris (through Lawrence Grossberg's musings on the object of study used in cultural studies) notes that such objects from moment to moment do not remain the same and thus do not "allow the comfortable leisure of academic criticism" (1998, p. 18). Along with Grossberg, she reframes this challenge to consider the change not as a problem but itself as the object of study. This is a necessary perspective to avoid presenting Toronto, or any city and its places, as a static object for the sake of research.

Similarly, the aim is not to present the transformations of the city or the cases as reinforcement of a linear way of thinking through timelines or reducing past versions of the city to historical case studies. The presence of past, present, future expresses itself in simultaneity rather than linearity. Instead, like Meaghan Morris argues in her introduction, this research will be focused on 'context' which is used "to describe a method as well as an object of cultural studies research" (1998, p. 7). Morris further characterizes a context as a fragment of everyday life "positioned between culture, understood as 'a specific body of practices,' and particular social forces, institutions and relations of power" (Ibid.). While, like a case study, context provides some limitations to the research, it is dynamic and fits well with the theoretical framework given on space, place and sense in the next chapter.

Urban Imaginaries

These contexts are in the case of this research the Quayside development with specific focus on the site formerly designated for Google's Sidewalk Labs project, the Eglinton West neighborhood known as Little Jamaica and a part along the Humber River which was the site of the Re-sistering Project's Three Sisters garden. Although highly diverging contexts that require their own sets of approaches and engagements to thoroughly contextualize, approach, engage and reflect on the role of sense(s) of place(s), they all three provide urban imaginaries of Toronto in varying forms. These imaginaries are here understood through Andreas Huyssen's (2008) words as 'first and foremost the way city dwellers imagine their own city as the place of everyday life, the site of inspiring traditions and continuities as well as the scene of histories of destructions, crime, and conflicts of all kinds' (p. 3). That is not to think of this as only part of the imagination, but also in acknowledgement that these imaginaries are components of the actualized form of a city to the extent that 'what we think about a city and how we perceive it

informs the ways we act in it' (Ibid.). In its many dimensions urban imaginaries furthermore not only interact with what is to be found within the city but 'are also sites of encounters with other cities, mediated through travel and tourism, diasporas and labor migration, cinema, television, and the Internet' (Huyssen, 2008, p. 5). The imaginaries shared here come from different actors (individuals, organizations or communities) and take the shape of poems, actions, masterplans, gardens, fundraisers and extensive reports.

Material and Matter(s) of Concern

The gathering in this research is not the collection of data, but rather of material for several reasons as outlined by Ann Gray (2003) in her overview of cultural studies research practices. She explores how: 'material' allows for the variety of shapes and forms that the contexts and urban imaginaries come in to be included; it suggests a substantiality of the material and encourages considerations of its grounded and embodied character; it does away with the idea that the to be collected data is abstract or does not yet hold significance; and, moreover, enables this research to discuss material that is relevant to the matter of concern of this research (p. 2).

The choice for 'material' furthermore engages with the research's aim to not only consider affective and emotional attachments or emergences, but to consider the physical presence of the city's composition too. The palimpsest as metaphor already provides this element of how matter comes to matter, which can be further explored if the actual material qualities of the cases are discussed. This is perhaps not a full-fledged engagement with material culture research, but an awareness of what physical qualities, shapes, aesthetics and more might do in relation to the questions revolving around sense of place, urban imaginaries and transformations of a city. Not unimportantly it also sets up the research to be able to ask why certain urban

imaginaries are expressed in specific mediums, materials or forms. It is after all interested in how these urban imaginaries are shaped in alignment with or disagreement of sense(s) of place(s).

To approach these contexts and urban imaginaries, and to address the material selected, this research delves into a cultural analysis. Stemming from a humanities approach to research expanded upon by Mieke Bal, cultural analysis is not about studying culture, as "'culture' is not its object" but looks at the objects of study (or in this case contexts and imaginaries) as "always-already engaged, as interlocutors, within the larger culture from which they have emerged" (Bal, 2002, p. 9). Further analysis will be based on the material, if that requires a closer reading or visual analysis or of an exploration of sounds and other senses. Besides, the view on cultural analysis taken into account in this work not only reflects on the need to situate the objects of study within 'the larger culture' but to similarly situate the research in its whole and the researcher, myself. Rather than separating these components of the research I would like to see these together and as inherently entwined.

To a certain extent this move towards the question what and how the material matters in this research, much like critiques made by Bruno Latour when he argued the move from 'matters of fact' to 'matters of concern', but follows along to Maria Puig de la Bellacasa's (2017) more recent work on 'matters of care' that builds on the already established rejection of "the representation of science, technology, and nature as depoliticized matters of fact, as uncontestable truths" and extensive work in feminist thought (p. 18). Such reconfigurations require thinking about what things generate care and how to care-fully tend to relations, things and the worlds we live in.

Besides the data not being thought of as facts and truths, it in general attunes to what would be 'weak theory' instead of 'strong theory'. Following Eve Sedgwick, Kathleen Stewart

(2008) describes this weak theory as "theory that comes unstuck from its own line of thought to follow the objects it encounters or becomes undone by its attention to things that don't just *add up* but take on a life of their own as problems for thought" (p. 72). It aligns with what Sedgwick (2003) referred to as a reparative reading as opposed to paranoid reading, which had become a way of approaching 'reading' that omits surprise and chance and indicates not just strong affect, but often negative affect particularly. Tending to things through reparative reading and weak theory then allows for "partial understandings and multiplicity", and "both contradictions and inconsistency" (Wright, 2015, p. 392). This opens up the possibility of tending to the cases and the research with care. It furthermore enables an interaction with not only emotions, but also the affective sphere in the (more-than-human) attachments and becomings formed (Wright, 2015). As immersed "in the middle of things" weak theory is a way of attuning to potentials and surprise while considering the messiness and stickiness of an unfinished world (Stewart, 2008, p. 77).

Locating the Self

There is much to be said about situating the self, positionality and engaging in self-reflexive practices in research, and this will be taken up repeatedly throughout these pages. While, perhaps, there is still traditional encouragement from academia to distance oneself from the research, there is no intent to do so in this work. The thesis is written as an engagement with a city and settler country that I currently live in and involves locations that I encounter daily or have interacted with multiple times over the past year and a half on Indigenous lands. I also do not wish to separate myself from the research practice itself and want to consider what relations and responsibilities there are in considering the contexts of the cases, in acknowledgement of my own positionality or what would be the 'situated knowledges' that form (Haraway, 1991).

Reflecting Juanita Sundberg (2014) I want to follow the steps towards decolonizing academic practices by 'locating the self', 'learning to learn' and 'walking with' in fostering relations with theories and epistemes outside of academia. I do not see this thesis only as the expressing of knowledge I have, but as knowledge I have gained and what other learning opportunities there are, if this relates to the city and its different places or to the research practices. That is not a distanced relationship but one that should foster intimacy, not in the least through an understanding of 'grounded normativity' such as Glen Coulthard develops in Red Skin, White Masks (2014). This ethical framework refers to "Indigenous place-based practices and associated forms of knowledge" that teaches "how to live our lives in relation to other people and nonhuman life forms in a profoundly nonauthoritarian, nondominating, nonexploitative manner" (Coulthard & Simpson, 2016: p. 254). It is important to note here that this research is not simply to disseminate whatever knowledge I have, but to describe in parts the learning that happens along the way and is still needed.

Travelling Concepts

To frame the research, both in discussing the already existing literature and in doing the work involved in this thesis, sense of place is taken as a 'travelling concept' to further situate the research itself and the contexts as mentioned above. In its cultural analysis the research will refer to sense of place as travelling concept rather than to present a strict method in reference to Mieke Bal's (2009) encouragement to 'work with concepts'. Bal further explores what it means to focus on concepts instead of methods when she explains that "while groping to define, provisionally and partly, what a particular concept may mean, we gain insight into what it can do" (Ibid.). The theories, concepts and understandings formed in relation to sense of place within different academic fields or outside of the university that will be discussed in depth in the next section, are

thus an exploration of how concepts seem to travel. The approach to the research is thus not to apply, utilize or use sense of place as a concept but to keep it "under scrutiny through a confrontation with, not an application to, the cultural object being examined" (Bal, 2009: p. 19). In agreement with Bal, it does not propose these concepts as fixed, but considers how they travel and in what ways this flexibility can be useful in relating it to the topic at hand.

However, the approach taken in this thesis also acknowledges how this concept of travel can reduce some influences to forgotten destinations along the way. Michael Frank mentions Edward Said's notion of 'travelling theories' which describe how theories "journey both in space and in time" (2009, p. 61). Although the focus is on theories and not concepts, the understanding of travel to be part of how we understand certain concepts or theories is important, especially when also acknowledging the privilege attributed to travel. Frank posits that it is no surprise that the travel metaphor has appeal when 'Western' academics will probably be privileged travelers themselves. While the flexibility lent to theories and concepts that move around is useful, it cannot be integrated in this thesis without considering that the (re)shaping of these elements as they travel is most likely a selective process as well. Frank argues that theories, or in the case of Bal concepts, 'do not usually travel in their entirety' and that 'they are reduced to those concepts which can best be adapted to the theoretical needs of the moment and which are accordingly overemphasized, while others remain underemphasized, if not altogether neglected" (2009, p. 73). The stickiness of certain concepts and particular components or characteristics over others while they travel should thus be regarded critically.

The following chapters will thus take on several tasks as it aims to think about and through the concept of sense of place. It does so by both reconfiguring the literature and epistemologies that entangle themselves in this concept – and reflects briefly on how some perspectives have not

been included as much – before it delves deeper into the layers that make up Toronto and what goes on between them as it looks at the three specific case studies or contexts. By considering the materiality and immateriality of urban imaginaries in the form of poetry, farming, urban planning and so on, it aims to attune to the sense(s) of place(s) felt and experienced and what roles these play in the imagining of (parts of) Toronto. The research takes into account conversations around multiplicity, affective geographies and components of care in particular.

3. Literature Review

Breaking down the various components of sense of place is not an attempt at deconstructing either the concept or the city within which it is imagined in this research. It, instead, is intended to be attentive to the many details of something composed of different elements. It opens up sense of place, not to make sense of place but to understand places and senses in their own rights before deepening the entanglements in the composition that is or are 'sense(s) of place(s)'.

As mentioned in the introduction, the aim is not to give an all-encompassing look at the history of the concepts of place, space, sense of place, cities as palimpsests or practices of place-making and the likes but rather to place in juxtaposition and to intertwine various theories, epistemologies and concepts. This means that the literature discussed here will also have to come from various disciplines. With the intent of adequately engaging with the multiplicity of space and cities, this literature should also be seen as a varied network of thoughts and concepts, expressing the idea that the concepts used have been and are travelling between these disciplines and epistemologies. This movement is not considered as neutral, but the overview takes into account how certain components of the concept have stuck and come back repeatedly in the context of 'Western' academia (Frank, 2009). It is a modest attempt at making this research part of pluriversal worlds and expresses an interest in the act of leaning into and learning about multiepistemic literacy (Sundberg, 2013; Kuokkanen, 2007). Rauna Kuokkanen (2007) describes this as "literacy understood in a broad sense, as an ability not only to read and write but also to listen and hear" (p. 155). Sundberg further builds on this idea in reference to the Zapatistas movement and their epistemology of 'walking with' by outlining a type of homework for researchers and others. The steps that make up this process are locating the self, learning to learn and walking with which will find more in-depth expression as the following framework

develops.

The knots that knot in this research are thus stemming from the fields of urban and cultural studies, but engage with perspective from anthropology, environmental studies and sociology. It takes into account different Indigenous epistemologies as expressed in academic publications but also in the works of authors reaching a public outside of the university. It is important to note however, that this literature review still predominantly presents work from academics and thinkers in a 'Western' tradition, which is also the field that I as researcher have worked in mostly throughout my academic career. This approach to not only considering the cases and the contexts to be multiple and as part of pluriversal worlds thus extends to the actual research and my own role as researcher too. It is certainly necessary to reflect on one's own position, especially when considering these place-based theoretical and conceptual frameworks. They are not so much scaffolding upon which to put the case studies considering the Eglinton West community, Quayside and the Three Sister Garden along the Humber river, but weave themselves in and out of the everyday lives of people, the systems of power in place and the more-than-human worlds. These imaginations also need to be taken along the different paths followed in the coming pages.

A. Sense of <u>Place</u>

The Spatial Turn

To provide more context to the development of a concept like place it might be best to start with what is called 'the spatial turn' in academia. This change reflects both an increased interest in using spatial terms and practices like mapping to think about issues in the field of geography, but also disciplines like sociology, cultural studies, political science and more, as well as considering science itself from a (historical-)geographical perspective (Warf & Arias, 2008; Withers, 2009).

While on the one hand this development can be as ‘simple’ as using terms like ‘space’ and ‘place’, a part of the spatial turn has also involved rethinking the role of spatiality and has emphasized its importance alongside and not necessarily as ancillary to time and history (Warf & Arias, 2008). Edward Soja (1989) further describes the reassertion of space and spatiality as being both an emphasis in the general sense “in ontological, epistemological, and theoretical discourse and practical understanding of the material world” (p. 158) as well as an expression of a process closely linked with the capitalist ideology steering contemporary society. This (contemporary) time throughout which the spatial turn took place dealt extensively with the pressures of globalization, of time-space compression, of the dominance of neoliberalism, and of perhaps somewhat extreme notions that these developments would mean the end of geography (Warf & Arias, 2008). Globalization’s supposed tendency to homogenize the world has proven to be a much more complex process (Swyngedouw, 1997) and space has remained a significant component to discuss.

Although the spatial turn has perhaps presented a shared interest and recognition of the importance of spatial components, the definition or even characteristics of space and related terms has not necessarily been agreed on (Withers, 2009). Out of frustrations with the ways that geography was using space as something abstract and using generalizing tendencies humanistic geographers like Yi-Fu Tuan (1977; 1974) and Edward Relph (1976) led the way to bring into focus human experience and meaning (Williams, 2014). They turn to the particularities of place not to engage with it as simply a geographical location, a region or a territory, but as involving human experience and subjectivity (Cresswell, 2004, p. 19-20). In mostly philosophical or phenomenological approaches Relph and Tuan thus developed concepts of authenticity of place and topophilia and thought more about the way place holds significance for a human’s being-in-

the-world (Cresswell, 2004).

However, even with the spatial turn (re)introducing these spatial components or frameworks into fields of research, critique remains on what conceptualizations of space are resultingly often used such as Jon May and Nigel Thrift have outlined (2001). They argue that the spatial turn has not really "progressed beyond the level of metaphor" and more importantly "the basic formulations of space evident within the spatial turn, formulations that appear to us curiously one-dimensional and which, at root, seem premised upon a familiar and unhelpful dualism moving around the foundational categories of Space and Time" (May & Thrift, 2001: p. 1). Such a bifurcation of time and space rested on the idea that time encompasses "richness, life, dialectic" while space is viewed as "fixed, dead, undialectical" in the words of Soja (1989: p. 11). May and Thrift (2001) turn to TimeSpace to address these issues, others have followed in Henri Lefebvre's footsteps to consider rhythms and embodiment more closely (e.g., Edensor, 2010), and as such the breadth, and depth, of spatiality has expanded exponentially. Perhaps the palimpsest can be another such idea where temporality and spatiality are not held in opposition, but actively work together. In any of these cases space and place are not limited to the bounded, static and lifeless characterizations that were most often engaged with leading up to the spatial turn.

Space and Place

These tensions between time and space, history and geography, but also the relation between space and place are what still influence the debates in geography and beyond. It is hard to arrive at a conceptualization of place without looking at space, in the same way that it is necessary to contextualize sense of place within this broader frame of reference. Without going through an entire history of the development of these concepts, the following are a few influential thinkers

and their definitions or schemes to think about space and place and its workings in the world. It follows specific thoughts, some renowned and often quoted and others more recent, to create a network or framework of reference for this thesis. The fluctuations in the developments of the terms further the elusiveness of spatiality and its related concepts as much as it informs what 'place' is thought of in this research's 'sense(s) of place(s)'.

Yi-Fu Tuan elaborated how space and place "require each other for definition" (1977, p. 6). He brings the two in an important and intricate relation: space is the open and abstract freedom, while place is "enclosed and humanized space" which provides security (Tuan, 1977, p. 54). The focus in *Space and Place* (1977) and *Topophilia* (1974) is on place and thus on human experience. However, Tuan also acknowledges how both are needed as basic components in the world. People can get to know space, get a 'feel' for it, and through the meaning and value attached to it make it into place, something familiar, a pause and stability. The human experience as described by Tuan are thus composed of the movements within space and finding its place in place.

This idea of movements is also taken up in Michel De Certeau's *The Practice of Everyday Life* (1984) who talks much about walking. De Certeau presents the city as (il)legible through literary metaphors, maps and spatial stories and discusses the planner's view from above versus that of the person walking below in the midst of movement. For De Certeau place is the set of relationships and configurations that are fixed, while "space is practiced place", the acting out of an urban script that is in some cases already written (1984: 117).

Henri Lefebvre gives another conceptualization in among others his work *The Production of Space* (1991). He presents a trialectic of conceived space, lived space and perceived space which respectively deal with structures of power through governments, planners and capitalism;

the desires of dwellers; and the way space is actually used by these dwellers (Lefebvre, 1991; Merrifield, 1993). The intersection of these three manifests and grounds itself in place, where the three can clash and contest one another (Vermeulen, 2015). Andrew Merrifield (1993) has ironically identified a Lefebvrian conception of place as practiced space in reference to De Certeau's readings of the concepts.

These three different approaches show some similarities in the way that tensions exist between space and place, between the abstract and the specific, the structures imposed from 'above' and the everyday going on 'below', while also showing significant differences. Tuan shows the affective qualities of identity and meaning making in relation to place, De Certeau explores (linguistic) tactics and strategies that form and oppose the urban landscape and Lefebvre goes beyond a binary to further engage with the complexities of space. Still, they emphasize the element of the human and individual in relation and opposition to a status quo, be it social or political, or both. They wonder who can make space, give it meaning or define its limits and potentials. These considerations of space open up the debate on whether space and place are fixed entities or if they are still subject to change and initiates questions about who actually has the power to do so. In case of Henri Lefebvre, it opens up concerns about the right to the city (1996/1986). In any of these definitions and frameworks there is room for space and place to be both lively and vital to understanding life in cities and beyond.

Such vitality continues in the work of Doreen Massey who builds extensively on the writings of Yi-Fu Tuan, Michel De Certeau and Henri Lefebvre and provides another crucial step along the way. She opens her book *For Space* (2005) with three propositions. First, she urges to "recognize space as the product of interrelations" on all levels and scales. Second, her understanding of space entails the possibility of multiplicity, plurality and "coexisting

heterogeneity". And last, it is always in the process of being made, unfinished ("except that 'finishing' is not on the agenda") (Massey, 2005: p. 107). Her dynamic image of space requires openness and an adaptiveness to the many situations in which it may emerge and requires a confrontation with the challenge of actually negotiating this multiplicity. The political is not separate from this spatial event.

Massey brings her idea of place, like others before her, in relation to this interrelated, multiple, and under construction space. She writes

> if space is rather a simultaneity of stories-so-far, then places are collection of those stories, articulations within the wider power-geometries of space. Their character will be a product of these intersections within that wider setting, and of what is made of them. And, too, of the non-meetings-up, the disconnections and the relations not established, the exclusions. All this contributes to the specificity of place. (Massey, 2005: p. 130)

The 'throwntogetherness' and simultaneity of place make for a sphere where conflict always exists and where politics, power and the social intersect. It is not as earlier theories would have it a separation of time and space, but time is integrated into places (Massey, 2005: p. 130). This interweaving of time and space makes space eventful, or as Tim Cresswell (2004) writes, place "becomes an event" which is "marked by openness and change rather than boundedness and permanence" (p. 39). In attributing this element of depth and complexity to the spatial configurations Cresswell and Massey forego place as a dot on a map and the process of moving through space as merely crossing over a surface, nor is this space tied only to personal experiences. Looking back at the changes in thinking about space and place it is not just that places "go on without you" but that the terms, theories and thoughts (should) keep on changing too (Massey, 2000: p. 90). In other words, it steers away from the sense of security Tuan

attributed to place and its familiarity and perhaps in the same way does not provide security by seeking out ontological stability (Cresswell, 2004: p. 39). Last, Massey provides some openings into current thinking of more-than-human place in emphasizing the uniqueness of place in the "unavoidable challenge of negotiating a here-and-now" and a negotiation that "must take place within and between both human and nonhuman" (2005: p. 140).

More-than-human place

In the development of thinking around more-than-human worlds and the agency of nonhuman actors, Sarah Robertson (2018) for example, argues for a rethinking of the definitions of place and the processes that create it, especially in more-than-human worlds. These worlds which are often imagined to revolve around response-ability and care through its many intra-actions thus reflect on the role of humans but include other beings and their agency in this process too (Robertson, 2018; Larsen & Johnson, 2016; Bawaka Country et al., 2016). No longer framing place as the result of whatever meaning people have put into space, she emphasizes a need for an ecologically responsive ethic (Robertson, 2018: p. 8). Robertson in conversation with Donna Haraway, Karen Barad and Jane Bennett among others, sees this as the acknowledgement of "the intra-relationships in which 'humans' (as vital matter themselves) are always engaged in becomings-with more-than-human entities and their more-than-human worlds" (Robertson, 2018, p. 6). In relation to the environmental arguments for place such understanding must be place-based, grounded in connection and care, particularly when taking on the notions that these elements can create 'better' places as the claim for regeneration and revitalization projects have done (Robertson, 2018).

That component of care is what Jonathan Metzger (2014a) highlights in a conversation

around spatial planning. In building on feminist STS and Stiegler's work Metzger formulates 'caring for place' as a practice that can "be of help in focusing our attention on, sensitizing us to, and making us care for the complex more-than-human ecologies of our own existence as a species, further localizing our own situated part in them" (2014a, p. 1004). Similar to the concept of sense of place, this caring practice composes attachments, which in Metzger's work are thought of as 'territorial attachments' (2014a: p.1003). It implicates the self as caught up with a particular place and as caring for it, and as an aligning of interests with and in the interest of place. These are the imaginations of place and spatial utterances that shape much of this project.

The overview provided here is not intended to settle on one concept—place over space—, or one definition—such as place as the pause—in the continuation of the research. Many of these elements discussed influence the upcoming conceptual framework of sense of place. While space and place might not be interchangeable, it is hard to know where one begins and the other ends. Even more so, it takes the focus away from the actual questions this research hopes to answer that have to do with sense of place. Questions that revolve around the layers that make up cities and what affective entanglements emerge between them, the processes that involve attachment and identity and more. To formulate possible answers the next section will first consider what 'sense' in 'sense of place' attaches to the already discussed theories.

B. Sense of Place

Although breaking down and opening up the concept of sense of place might more often be steered in the direction of considering what 'place' entails, this section highlights specifically what possibilities there are in regarding 'sense' as an element that holds the same importance and which is interwoven in the concept of sense of place. To think of sense here is not, to repeat an earlier statement, to make sense of 'place' but it is an attempt at attuning differently to place and

seeing sensing as a way to get there as well as acknowledging that senses and practices of sensing are central to these understandings of (urban) space and place. The following then provides several different perspective and ways of thinking sense in relation to spatial terms and practices. It extends beyond 'the senses' to what emotional and affective bonds emerge as well. Some of these approaches are specifically linked to the urban, while others take up space and geography more broadly in reflecting on the emotions, affects and sense that shape these spaces and our understandings of them.

The connection of the senses with the city are certainly not a new thing. The metaphor of the palimpsest—from which this thesis builds its understanding of space and place as layered, complex and in the process of becoming—is grounded not only in linguistic and textual terms, but also in the visual. It is a concept that in its initial form relates closely to the ocular-centrism of our society and scholarship in general (Adams & Guy, 2007) or of the practices of city building and architecture more specifically (Spence, 2020). While the visual and textual interactions with cities and urban landscapes are thus pervasive, either in the idea of being able to read a city or perhaps in notions of the spectacle and the urban screens, the other senses have not been neglected since interest in sensory practices has increased (Adams & Guy, 2007). Sound especially has been discussed extensively, but smell, taste and touch have also found their way into our understandings of places. In varying compilations these senses of or in cities have been explored extensively (see e.g., Low & Kalekin-Fishman, 2017; Zardini, 2005). Even if some senses might be prioritized over others, it does not do away with the idea that they work together and are additional and constitutive layers of a city, not only because the senses are at work simultaneously but because different sensory registers of beings co-habitate in the urban landscape (Win, 2017).

These diverging sensory registers point towards the possibility, and a necessity, of considering the senses not only as limited to the human registers of perception (Win, 2017). Jennifer Gabrys and Helen Pritchard (2018)) outline this in their notion of 'sensing practices' which are framed in reference to Isabelle Stengers as "the ways in which sensing and practice emerge, take hold and form attachments across environmental, material and aesthetic concerns, subjects and milieus" and "the registers and practices of sensing are shifting from an assumed human-centered set of perceiving and decoding practices, to extended entities, technologies and environments of sense" (p. 394). Sense is here and in other writings not only thought of as an object to be studied, but as a framework and method to address inter-actions and relatings between different beings and their environments. As such, sensory research of cities, or the sensory turn in research (as companion to the spatial turn, the linguistic turn, affective turn and more), can offer "a potential for in-depth understanding of the dynamism in the experience of urban life" in 'urbanscapes' (Low & Kalekin-Fishman, 2017) and acknowledge the potential to understand the city as a "layering of multiple sensory registers" that engage with human and nonhuman relatings or becomings-with (Win, 2017, p. 187).

A connection can be made with Donna Haraway not only because of her expansive conversation around companion species, becoming-with, and so forth, but also for her conceptualization of the sense as not bounded in their respective boxes. In *When Species Meet* (2008) she focuses on touch and its relation with looking that is instrumental in understanding her concept of attachment sites. Haraway introduces the haptic as going beyond a passive role for the eye to then looking back at the Latin *respecere*, which entangles seeing with regard and respect (2008, p. 19). The interrelatedness of becoming-with that emerges when species meet is emphasized. However, it is the knots that knot and the process to get there that really takes center

stage and presents a need for rethinking the senses with regards to our response-abilities. Haraway argues that "touch does not make one small; it peppers its partners with attachment sites for world making. Touch, regard, looking back, becoming with – all these make us responsible in unpredictable ways for which worlds take shape" (2008, p. 36).

This entwinement of worldings and becoming withs is further taken up by for example Katherine Yusoff who presents not only the possibilities of sense-making, but of the insensible. Yusoff reflects that "in asking how responsibility is raised as a sensible question" there is also "a need to address the insensible, immaterial, and untimely dimensions of matter and relations" (2012, p. 208). It attends to the unknowable, imperceptible, and considers how this insensible might provide a way to engage with hard to grasp developments like climate change or the loss of biodiversity. Such worldings or becoming-withs, and the role sense or sensing plays in it, are presenting understandings of sensory registers to not be limited to individual or shared experiences, but through responsibility and respect that asks for more to be done.

Emotional and Affective Geographies

As sense and sensing practice provide another side to what feelings might arise in a specific context, in this case an urban one, it will be of use here to briefly reflect on the research of emotions and affect in cities. The relation between sensory studies and those of emotional or affective experiences and bonds is a close one. Some of the topics discussed do have overlap and research has been done that connects specific senses with emotional factors (Doughty et al., 2016). Especially in considering the emergence of emotional and affective geographies it should be emphasized in juxtaposition with an increased interest in the senses in relation to space and the concept of sense of place itself.

Much like the exploration of the different senses presents a path away from the

predominantly textual, linguistic and visual based approaches to geography and space related issues or experiences, the discussion of emotions opens up a similar avenue into questions of embodiment and experience already mentioned (Anderson & Smith, 2001; Davidson & Milligan, 2004). It recognizes the emotions as "ways of knowing, being and doing in the broadest sense" to add another layer to knowledge in geography and other fields (Anderson & Smith, 2001, p. 8).

To attune more to these feelings and experiences, either in the form of senses or emotions, moreover, allows for connections to be made with affect theory. Affect, as the capacity to affect and be affected (Massumi, 2002), is no easier to make sensible, nor is that really the intent of thinkers working with and through the concept. One way of taking on affect in geographies can be by referring to affective meaning as "the perceptions, interpretations, and expectations one ascribes to a specific physical and social setting ("affective" in the sense of showing how we are "affected" by environmental settings, and in turn "affecting" the way in which we experience and interpret the mapped environmental setting)" (Giaccardi & Fogli, 2008). Beyond meaning, affect has also been defined in juxtaposition with ecologies (Lobo, 2019), atmospheres (Anderson, 2009) and geographies itself (Giaccardi & Fogli, 2008; Duffy, Gallagher & Waitt, 2019) as some examples.

Nigel Thrift (2004; 2007) has extensively written about affect in cities and affective cities and contextualizes affect with the urban concisely to give at least somewhat of a coherent overview. He states that cities "can be seen as roiling maelstroms of affect", engaging with fear, anger, desire, joy and other oscillating affects emerging at varying scales (Thrift, 2007, p. 171). According to Thrift, affect is, despite its overflowing presence, not discussed enough or even neglected. That neglect is "criminal" because of three reasons: first, "systematic knowledges of the creation and mobilization of affect have become an integral part of the everyday urban

landscape'; second, "these knowledges are not only being deployed knowingly, they are also being deployed politically (mainly but not only by the rich and powerful) to political ends"; and last, "affect has become a part of how cities are understood" (Thrift, 2004, p. 58). As cities are increasingly described and promoted as vibrant and creative and affect is instrumentalized for political reasons or becomes part of landscape engineering, there is an urgency to think about this affect and its affects in cities. The explicitly political character of this discussion is a useful counterpart to conversations mentioned above.

These relations discussed are geographies of intimacy spanning sense, emotions, affect and care. This at last brings us to geographies of care, both literally as the mapping of care work and more abstractly as the bonds and relations of maintenance, care and responsibility distributed through space (Parish & Montsion, 2018; Mattern, 2018). Such connections can be thought of in the response-ability encouraged by regarding and respecting other species (Haraway, 2008) or in reflecting on geographies of responsibility (Massey, 2004). Attending to senses, emotions and affect can be good starts to care-fully consider place. This component will be taken up further in considering sense of place in the next sections.

C. Sense of Place

Sense of place is not a new concept and actually in two ways. First, but certainly not most importantly, it has been part of urban planning jargon since the 90s and as part of the spatial turn and the resurgence of interest in space and place has informed many different disciplines beyond geography. Second, but obviously not of less significance, there is also a sensibility and attunement to sense of place that goes further back and more intrinsically so in various Indigenous understandings of ways of life and relationships with the land (Walker & Moscardo,

2016; Windsor & McVey, 2005). In the following I want to engage with both contexts and consider the different imaginations of sense of place as well as the similarities, especially when considering the development of sense of place as part of posthuman or more-than-human approach to geography.

The idea of sense of place and its significance emerges alongside other spatial terms in the previously mentioned spatial turn. It is both a term to understand the relation people have with places and a reflection on a contemporary society characterized by the forces of globalization. Yi-Fu Tuan, to come back once again to his influential work, wrote that in modern society "the relation between mobility and sense of place can be very complicated" (1977: p. 182). That context of a society dealing with time-space compression, images of the global village and a supposed pressure of homogenization, made questions about place specific characteristics complex and somewhat uncertain (Cresswell, 2004). It is no surprise that Edward Relph (1976) wrote about placelessness as the loss of uniqueness of place or that Marc Augé (1995) later developed the concept of non-places to describes sites like airports and other utterly (super)modern spaces. However, rather than doing away with place and space, or dismissing sense of place, there are also many instances of reflection on the context of globalization.

Doreen Massey in specific does not see the development as encouraging "the annihilation of space" but as "a radical reorganization of the challenges that spatiality poses" (2005: p. 96). She provides early on the idea of a 'global sense of place' that engages with the tensions between the local and global and the in between. Against the argument that globalization homogenizes society, she writes how the movement of people differ greatly, especially along the axis of gender and race, and thus emphasizes this idea to be focused on a universalist capitalism (Cresswell, 2004). However, with so much movement going on, she rejects the idea of place

being only the stable, stagnant element. Already describing her propositions for understanding space as interrelated, multiple and under construction, her global sense of place links to these characteristics; it is extrovert, progressive, and global. Place forms its identity not based on an internalized history, but in relation to others, beyond its boundaries (Massey, 1992). While her specific type of sense of place might be reactionary to the concerns around globalization at the end of the 20th century, the tensions she highlights are still very relevant in discussing any use of sense of place. It is thus not only a step along the way in the development or a history of the concept but influences what sense(s) of place(s) conceptualizations this research might entangle itself with once it gets to introducing the contexts.

Sense of place in geography and beyond

The concept has further developed as it has been put to use in different fields of research. While there has been some theoretical development, a lot of the sense of place research is still based on the work of Yi-Fu Tuan and his contemporaries. It has taken more concrete forms in research on tourism and place destination (Jarratt et al., 2019), environmental concerns and sustainability narratives (Verbrugge et al., 2019; Frantzeskaki et al., 2018) and the formation of community identity in relation to landscapes (Sampson and Goodrich, 2009) to just name a few contexts. As such the concept has been approached from sociology, sustainability studies, psychology, and management studies (Guthey et al., 2014) as well as from human or cultural geography. Since it has been used in such diverging contexts and often in changing understandings of the concepts, it is not surprising to see conflicting uses and definitions of sense of place and the factors or processes that are related to it (Convery et al., 2012). As such, it is not easy, nor desirable in the case of this thesis, to want to provide one definition.

Richard Stedman (2002) provides a conceptualisation of sense of place, in reference to Yi-Fu Tuan, at its most basic as "the meanings of and attachment to a setting held by an individual or group" (p. 561). Alternatively, Jarratt et al. (2019) write of sense of place "as the multifaceted way in which we know notable or memorable places through sensing, experiencing, and remembering a geographical location and its features" (2019, p. 410). Convery et al. (2012) in the introduction to *Making Sense of Place* that discussed multidisciplinary approaches to spatial relations and processes recognize two differences in the use of sense of place. The first, in which sense of place "is used to explore a range of factors which together define the character, or local distinctiveness, of a specific place" and the second, where "the term has been used to emphasise the ways in which people experience, use and understand place" (Convery et al., 2012, p. 2). In any case the focus is on the relation between an environment, setting or location and people.

In further specifying components of sense of place the most commonly used terms are place meaning, place attachment, place identity, place dependence or even place satisfaction (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001; Mulvaney et al., 2020; Raymond, Kyttä & Stedman, 2017; Stedman, 2003). In some cases, these are presented as separate categories (Mulvaney et al., 2020; Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001) and in other research, for example, dependence and identity might be subjected to place attachment (Masterson et al., 2017). There seems to be, however, a general agreement that the categories often overlap and can be compounded even if there are slight differences between them (Jorgensen & Stedman, 2001). The components of attachment or identity identify specifically emotional connections (of people with a landscape, a neighborhood, a room) while place meaning explores more in depth what symbolic meaning is attributed to that place and what semiotic interpretations might emerge (Raymond, Kyttä & Stedman, 2017). Place

dependence is more attuned to what activities or livelihoods can take place in a certain area, thus further connecting everyday practices and the material constraint or possibilities of a locale (Mulvaney et al., 2020). These factors together entail the "physical setting, human activities, human social and psychological processes rooted in the setting" (Stedman, 2002, p. 562).

The emphasis on place attachment or other components might depend on the context and topic of the research. Sampson and Goodrich (2009) focus on the potential and importance of attachment in considering the formation of community identity in a specific part of New Zealand while research by Mulvaney et al., (2020) does research on sense of place in relation to water quality can focus more on place dependence since the possibility to swim or other activities significantly changes the relation to a place.

Another changing factor has to do with the emphasis placed, or the lack thereof, on the materiality of the place and how it plays a role in forming sense of place. Multiple researchers (Stedman, 2003; McCunn & Lindsay, 2018; Sampson & Goodrich, 2009) highlight how the physical environment also shapes what attachments, meanings or identities are formed. A clear example of this perspective would be in exploring the influence of landmarks on sense of place (McCunn & Lindsay, 2018) or in considering a concept like 'genius loci' to shape an understanding of the construct (Stedman, 2003). Thus, although the emphasis is usually on the way in which humans attribute meaning to a place (sense of place as a social product), these approaches also take into account how the material qualities of a setting can influence what these relations are (people and place are thus conceived of as mutually constructed. It might even be a way to connect with more-than-human conceptions of place where place itself is not just endowed with meaning but has agency of and in itself (Larsen & Johnson, 2016). In extension, considerations of more-than-human sense of place should not only relate to the setting or

landscape but can be that of animals and other non-human beings (Win, 2017, Bawaka Country et al., 2016). In other words, people are not the only beings to make or feel attachments with place, nor should boundaries between the human and its environment be that stark.

With these diverging conceptualisations and frameworks used, as well as the changing focus from meaning to attachment from emotional bonds to the material environment, it has led some to conclude that the 'scholarship' of sense of place is "confusing, contradictory or messy" (Masterson et al., 2017). This can to some extent be linked to the ways in which these types of research are thought of as either engaging with phenomenological and theoretical frameworks in relation to sense of place or if they take a positivist approach. The previously discussed examples of research do not all formulate different theoretical frameworks (the 'what') but rather focus on the 'how'. That is, some discuss and formulate ways in which sense of place can be collected in (quantifiable) data, others consider how sense of place can be utilised to make sense of other concepts, issues, or contexts. Those different uses of sense of place then are not necessarily concerned with developing the theoretical or conceptual framework further. Moreover, there is a wariness to reducing sense of place into scales or structured questionnaires as opposed to letting people come up with their own definitions of place (Convery et al., 2012). On the other hand, critique on the theoretically heavy approaches can be that there are too many assumptions without providing empirical evidence or that it lacks in considering other data. That has led to authors arguing for better integration of both theoretical and empirical factors in further research (Masterson et al., 2018; Mulvaney et al., 2020).

Resultingly, the articles written provide guides, toolkits, schemes and more to better understand what role sense of place might play in varying situations or how it in itself can be researched. They are often considerations of how to make sense of place into a conceptual or

methodological tool. One quite literal example is the development of sense of place toolkits, either as an element of destination branding or as indicators of place uniqueness, to identify distinctive qualities of a certain landscape that can be used by local businesses and organizations to attract and engage visitors (Jarratt et al, 2019). For the assessment of water quality it can provide insight into the social value of the state of the water if social and biophysical data are integrated (Mulvaney et al., 2020), organizational studies can see the potential of sense of place in creating new understandings of place-based organizational structures (Guthey et al., 2014) and as discussed by many the contribution of the concept to questions revolving around sustainability and resilience.

This last use of sense of place is especially pervasive and provides an interesting component to the concept not being passively created, but as forming a potential for concern and action. The relations between people and place are generally accepted to be good indicators to predict if people will care about changes happening to that place, either positive or negative, related to environmental issues, urban development, or other reasons (Verbrugge et al., 2019; Frantzeskaki et al., 2018; Guthey et al., 2014). That relationship is however also acknowledged to be more complex then just about a high level of attachment (Masterson et al., 2017; Raymond et al., 2017). Although place attachment is able to determine to some extent the willingness of people to engage with or feel responsible for a place, the meaning of these attachments needs to be taken into account to arrive at a more complete picture (Stedman, 2003). Stedman (2003) describes place satisfaction as an additional element to consider these possibilities for action. If attachment is present but there is also a satisfaction with the state of a place, it will not likely lead to action. A certain amount of tension between the components would need to exist or the meaning of the bonds formed needs to be looked at in more depth to understand what

attachments exactly are being formed and what this would do for people's willingness to participate in preserving a place (Stedman, 2003; Masterson et al., 2017). Place attachment, or having a sense of place, can thus not be directly linked with positive results for resilience thinking or sustainability goals, but has potential not only to predict behavior but also to help along (urban) transformations (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018). Framing sense of place in this way thus allows for questions of responsibility and stewardship to come into the discussion as it reemphasizes the relation between humans and their environments (urban or 'natural' or otherwise). These processes might even bring about interventions of 'restorative topophilia' or "the opportunity for positive dependence that underpins the emergence of virtuous cycles" in certain settings and thus provide a grounding for individual or collective action in preserving, improving, or maintaining specific places (Tidball and Stedman, 2012, p. 297). It might be a first step in considering a 'sense of self-in-place' which encompasses sense of place and the environmental self within which "humans understand and process various claims and arguments regarding the human relationship to and responsibilities for managing the natural world" (Cantrill & Senecah, 2001 as quoted in Convery et al., 2012).

Such possibilities are crucial in considering the rapid changes places go through, but this hopeful approach should also come with some concerns and leaves some questions still to be answered. So far there is little mentioned in this review on the question if all people form attachments and meanings with or in place similarly. This universalizing tendency is especially important to emphasize when additionally taking into account that the academic contexts and fields discussed here are referring to, working with and in predominantly 'Western' contexts. It therefore is important to reflect on who has a say in formulating a sense of place, who is able to form attachments with places or attribute meaning to it and what shared collective features are

agreed on by whom. Verbrugge et al. (2019) provide a critical note in their conclusion. Although they found the usefulness of sense of place in assessing the participation of the public in decision-making processes, which is enabled through the local knowledge and thus response-ability encouraged by a sense of place, the integration of science, policy and society is not a given (Verbrugge et al., 2019, p. 677). Extra work is needed to bring together different actors and to engage with varying levels of power and involvement. This gives a clear example of the challenges that might arise if the goal is transformative change, or on the other hand, if sense of place is further used as ideal slogan for urban development and marketing strategies. A critique on the discussed research of sense of place and the conceptualisations of sense of place used is that these questions do not have to be asked for the concept to be thought of as useful and thus utilized.

Last, it is important to state that, in line with the understanding of space and place to be plural, sense of place can also only be conceived as always being multiple. The many different expressions of senses of place(s) will not always agree with one another and such tensions are important to pay attention to (Frantzeskaki et al., 2018). These tensions can bring about conflict where sense of place plays an important role. It also enables thinking about sense of place not only as the positive, but also as entailing negative attachments, dissatisfaction and perhaps at the other extreme placelessness. While the concept and the scholarship of sense of place is thus interdisciplinary and complex and it might be presented as all together and at once "[apparent/confused]; [elusive/evident]; [consistent/contradictory]; [ambiguous/distinct]" (Convery et al., 2012, p. 6) the overview presented here is still lacking in its attempt to work with(in) pluriversal worlds and in fostering multi-epistemic literacy. The questions remaining are

taken up again in the next section that considers more in depth the concept of sense of place in Indigenous epistemologies and practices.

Indigenous understandings of sense of place

Within a context of geography and other disciplines, the concept of (sense of) place has significantly developed through the spatial turn and beyond. While the development is engrained in humanistic geography, it has also evolved into posthumanist perspectives, as for example explores previously through ideas of including more-than-human beings into the conversations had about space and place or in sensing practices. The groundwork of posthumanism however, can often already be found in Indigenous ways of being as Simone Bignall and Daryle Rigney (2019) express, as well as Juanita Sundberg (2014) in her call for decolonizing posthumanist geographies. By framing the phenomenon of posthumanities as a 'new' humanities, it remains entwined with "vestiges of an imperial attitude of negation towards Indigenous philosophies" (Bignall & Rigney, 2019, p. 169). Sundberg mentions two ways in which euro-centric models with specific relation to place tend to get stuck. Framed as performance she indicates, first, silence about location and second, silence about Indigenous epistemes. In addressing the multiplicity of space without paying attention to and thinking with understandings from outside of the 'Western' or a 'continental posthumanism', the heterogeneity of experience and the idea that this posthumanism is universally innovative is only reinforced. Sundberg (2013) presents to that regard the idea of "walking the world into being" as drawn on from the Zapatistas, which explores how 'walking' can be useful in considering the pluriverse or "a world in which many worlds fit" (p. 39). Other steps that can be taken towards decolonizing posthuman geographies are 'locating the self', 'learning to learn' and 'walking with'.

As mentioned in the overview of research perspectives engaged with throughout the

writing and developing of this thesis, these steps outlined by Sundberg are taken into account and hold significance in this research. I do not aim to distance myself as such from the research but am aware of my background as a white European and settler and how that influences both my situating within the university and the everyday practices of living in Toronto. It is also a reflection on my background in urban studies where euro-centric theory, models and themes are used, and a general lack of Indigenous perspectives or experiences are discussed. The process of writing this thesis has thus been a learning process and reframes my position not as a supposed expert in a field, but as a student of Indigenous ways of thinking and, as I will further develop sense of place notions in this context, of the land. It is thus an endeavour to foster 'multiepistemic literacy' (Sundberg, 2013) or decolonized nomadic thought (Bignall & Rigney, 2019) and to knot the Toronto cases to be discussed within a world of worlds. To do so, the Aboriginal or Indigenous perspectives are also not considered as homogeneous, but as expressing a multitude too, thus involving a depth and richness in epistemological and theoretical frameworks to engage with. The thoughts, theories and stories presented here are only a fraction of that density of ways of understanding the world. At the same time, some recurring elements are brought together here to help think through connections between people and place that are shared. In any case, the intent to engage with Indigenous epistemologies in these urban contexts needs to be grounded within acknowledgements of the lack of space for Indigenous peoples and voices thus not only in the academic context, but similarly in urban landscapes.

Urban Indigeneity or Indigenous Urbanity

The lack of space for Indigenous peoples and voices in the academic context, and beyond, similarly finds expression in urban landscapes. While urban indigeneity is now being written about and researched in many publications and is the focus of multiple (Indigenous) researchers'

work (Blomley, 2004; Peters & Anderson, 2013; Howard-Wagner, 2020), there is still a pervasive idea that the urban and the Indigenous do not go together. As Nicholas Blomley (2004) explains in *Unsettling the City* urban displacement entails "two related maneuvers" where the first relates that "native people must be conceptually *removed* from urban space" and "if located anywhere, [they] are frequently imagined in the past or in nature" thus outside of the city and second, "displacement requires the concomitant *emplacement* of a settler society" (p. 114). These dynamics and processes are more adequately and to its full complexity discussed in the referenced works but need to be interacted with in relation to the concept of sense of place and the research of contexts in the urban sphere too, especially in what is a settler-colonial city. Kimari and Parish (2020) in their article on Toronto's Don River and Nairobi's Mathare River mention the necessity to "reflect on the role of the city's rivers in the dynamics of displacement and emplacement that characterize both the past and present of the settler-colonial city" (in reference to Blomley (2004), p. 645). The forms such forces of displacements take on can relate to gentrification or to the (in)visibility of homelessness in cities, but the older (hi)stories of the land and the (forced) displacement that has disconnected Indigenous peoples (and other racialized communities) from their lands. These processes are also still affecting communities today. The aim is not to only enable deeper understandings of the way we as humans experience and attach to space and place and how other beings form relations too, but also to reflect on the practices that have excluded certain groups both from the experience of the urban and the thinking and theory about that experience.

As such, the conversation around sense of place needs to also include debates on the loss of sense of place and who does not have the same possibilities to (re)connect to the land. The importance of discussing this topic moreover relates to the ways in which being rooted, having a

sense of belonging or attachment to place, are related to one's well being and (mental) health (Windsor & McVey, 2005, p. 148). To lose place or sense of place, to be displaced, is especially impactful it is acknowledged like Windsor and McVey (2005) do that "the involuntary loss of place (place annihilation) is more devastating to First Nations' groups than to Europeans because, first, First Nations tend to have stronger spiritual and emotional connections to home places and, second, Europeans appear to have lost much of their place identity and, therefore, a sense of place" (p. 146). Such uprooting has taken place continuously in the history of Turtle Island with settlers arriving. More recently the displacing of Indigenous communities has also happened indirectly, for example through the development of large infrastructures such as dams that drastically alter the landscape and thus impact the people dependent on and living with that land as in the case of the Cheslatta T'En First Nation (Windsor & McVey, 2005). Such projects have further exacerbated the dispossession, annihilation, and loss of place for Indigenous individuals and communities that are through this only further oppressed (Windsor & McVey, 2005). The discussion on sense of place needs to acknowledge and take into account the displacement that has happened and continuous to take place.

Only considering loss and displacement with regards to relation between urban space and people in Indigenous contexts is not providing a well-rounded picture. The move of many Native people to cities, involuntary or not, does not signify a complete disconnection with the land. Leanne Betasomasake Simpson writes for example in *As We Have Always Done* (2017) that Indigenous people "have found ways to connect to land and our stories and to live our intelligence no matter how urban or how destroyed our homelands have become" (p. 173) and recognizes cities as important sites of resurgence. Her book addresses Nishnaabeg intelligence in particular that emphasizes knowledge as grounded in place and encourages the many ways in

which learning from the land is part of Nishnaabewon (Simpson, 2017). The story Simpson shares is that of Binoojiinh (which means child) who learns from fellow animals and plants about the sap in maple trees. The lesson about land-based pedagogy Simpson provides is not only helpful to understand in what ways place holds significance for Indigenous epistemes, but also presents avenues for this research to take in reconsidering what roles the land might play and what constitutes as knowledge.

Another such story is part of Robin Wall Kimmerer's *Braiding Sweetgrass* (2013) where she talks about a similar tale, but through that of the Anishinaabe Nanabozho or the First Man. She shares how Nanabozho "becomes indigenous to place" in "honoring the knowledge in the land, and caring for its keepers" while he grounds himself and finds his footing in the world (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 210). These ideas of the land as pedagogy as well as becoming Indigenous to place put different relationships forward then what is normally seen in geography or urban studies and thus asks many to tend to space, place and land differently.

The further entwining of knowledge and place is taken up by Johnson and Larsen in *A Deeper Sense of Place* (2013) which discusses geographers' collaborative work with Indigenous communities and the problems or good practices that might be considered. They lay out how knowledge and an understanding of the world are shaped "through firsthand experience in *place*' as opposed to 'universal' knowledge which 'is typically seen as lifeless, limited, probably impossible, and possibly dangerous" (p. 10). They not only reflect on the role of the researcher or the communities of Indigenous peoples, but also on that of place which should be considered as an active participant (Johnson & Larsen, 2013, pp. 10, 14). Bringing place into the practice of place-based learning is an opening up of the conversation on the question of agency. In a different article Larsen and Johnson (2016) emphasize how "place has agency independent of

human embodiment or awareness and, in fact, human embodiment and awareness are an extension of the agency of place" (p. 151). Place creates, speaks, and teaches in ways that entangles people into a more-than-human geographical self (Larsen & Johnson, 2016, p. 152). The embodied practice involved Johnson and Larsen call *placework* or the "ways of thinking, acting, and being grounded in the agency of place that are attentive to the ways specific places manifest this agency" (2016, p. 153). Learning and research are thus not only practices done on or with the land, but place works on people. This agency and power shared with place also relates to the question of authorship as one of the referenced works shows.

In various publications of research done in collaboration with Aboriginal Yolnju caretakes the list of authors does not only include the researchers and Aboriginal caretakers, but also the land (Bawaka Country et al. 2016; Wright et al., 2012). Bawaka Country (located in North East Arnhemland in Australia) has authorship in these publications and is considered in the discussion of relations between various actors in the research as well as regarded as a sharer of knowledge (Wright et al., 2012). Bawaka Country et al. (2016) write that "Bawaka enabled our learning, our meeting, the stories that guide us, the connections we discuss and has, indeed, brought us into being, as we are, and continue to co-become today" (p. 456). The co-becoming of this practice engages with human and more-than-human participants in likewise manners to consider other ways of being and belonging on and with the land. It moreover shows attentive relations that indicate an element of care.

This learning with place, the co-becoming and the placework, are perhaps ways of thinking how sense of place can turn into care of place (Walker & Moscardo, 2016). Such care of place is instrumental in considering how it might lead from attention to intention and then action, for example in the case of environmental concern and the potential of participating in the

preserving of river landscapes or the forming of resilient cities (Verbrugge et al., 2019; Robertson, 2018). With regard to urban settings Michele Lobo further integrates Yolnju perspectives to think about "doing place and space through an ethics of care" (2019, p. 395). Care can then perhaps in these cases be thought of in the well-known words from Joan Tronto and Berenice Fisher (1990) as "a species activity that includes everything that we do to maintain, continue, and repair our 'world' so that we can live in it as well as possible" (p. 40).). Reframing this as an interspecies activity and as a process involving multiple worlds would further align it with the already discussed perspectives. It moreover allows for considerations how certain 'worlds' have to deal with stronger threats and with higher impact if the lands are not maintained, continued or repaired. Simpson (2017) reflects on this when she argues that "to survive *as Nishnaabeg*" the land needs to "once again *become* the pedagogy" (p. 160). The conservation of place is thus of importance not just for the thriving of the land, but also for the preserving of communities and individuals too.

The connection between learning from the land and the maintenance of communities or individuals further relates to the way that Larsen and Johnson (2016) describe how place creates, speaks, and teaches in ways that entangles people into a more-than-human geographical self (p. 152). It thus brings care and knowledge together and provides a perspective which 'Western' thought, academia, settlers and myself can learn. That learning can come from plants (Kimmerer, 2013), Aki in general (Simpson, 2017) or more simply the land, but also from Indigenous knowledges. From these stories and lessons, place is not understood as separate from us, but as vital, emerging and as having its own voice and agency, while also being entangled with humans. This is knowledge, pedagogy, education, or intelligence that is tied up intricately in notions of relationality, reciprocal generosity, and respectful care (Bignall & Rigney, 2019).

To return to a more-than-human sense of place can therefore not claim that, as Bignall & Rigney (2019) argue, it is innovative and 'new' because many of the components can be drawn from, but more importantly learned from Indigenous epistemologies. A more-than-human understanding of place therefore requires doing placework and fostering pluriversal responsibility in careful articulations and performative work (Larsen & Johnson, 2016; Sundberg, 2013). Otherwise, it would simply disregard the stories that have been told and the co-becoming that has shaped people and landscapes, thus erasing these specific understanding or imaginations of (sense of) place. In the urban context that could entail working on top of a layer and obscuring what is underneath. An integrating of the previously discussed could regard "this here and now or the immanence of many urban worlds" as it "contributes to the thickness of the present that blurs the linearity of a singular human time with a past, present and future" (Lobo, 2019, p. 399).

The various approaches described above thus bring together questions about the practices, theories and epistemologies involved in this research. It presents multiple interpretations of the concept of sense of place, but also of the component of place and sense and of its urban context. As mentioned earlier the approach taken in this thesis is not by using one definition, but to enable for conversations to form across the varying ideas and thoughts on sense of place as urban imaginaries are formed and expressed. To that goal, the concept that frames this work is thus not simply 'sense of place' but sense(s) of place(s) in acknowledgement of the diversity of standpoints and what would be a layered understanding of urban space. Some of the main themes as discussed above that are specifically taken into account in the next chapter where the contexts are introduced revolve around sensing, affect, relatings, care and response-ability to continue getting caught up in the city.

4. Introduction to the contexts

To further contextualize the three sites within Toronto and as part of the imaginations that exist of the city, a starting point might be to return to the multiplicity Dionne Brand mentioned and to the more predominant way in which Toronto has been presented as consisting of multiplicities. The idea of Toronto as being the place where many cultures live side by side, as a multicultural city, is one such conceptualization that has stuck. Promoted as multicultural by the City government in its tourism section and more, it has reinforced the label for example through its slogan 'diversity our strength' (Doucet, 2004; City of Toronto, 'Equity, Diversity and Inclusion'). To be in Toronto is to 'embrace the world' as the bid for the Olympics presented. As Pico Iyer wrote Toronto is a 'city made up out of a hundred diasporas' (as quoted in Leow, 2012: p. 192). The multiculturalism of the city and the way it has been promoted to attract tourists, capital, investors, and more present diversity only in a reductive imagination. Integrated into creative city narratives Levin and Solga describe the city's approach as that of the 'salad bar' as the Tourism Toronto website states 'You know the feeling you get when you come across an amazing menu and want to order every dish? That's what it's like to be here' (2006: as quoted in Levin and Solga, 2009, p. 42). Another sensory experience is utilized by Iyer as he describes being in the city as if to "[spin] through cultures as if [he] were sampling World Music rhythms on a hip-hop record" (124, as quoted in Leow, 2012, p. 195). Diversity conceived of as salad bar or as jukebox imagines the multicultural or cosmopolitan Toronto mostly as easily consumable. As perhaps diversity without difference (Levin and Solga, 2009) these multicultural imaginations of Toronto do not necessarily engage with its complexity. Still, it is often presented as an excellent example of what a Global City Toronto would be able to become or already is (Patterson, 2016; Leow, 2012).

As alternative Toronto has also been characterized as a city of neighborhoods. In some instances, in opposition of the global city narrative, this city of neighborhoods reflects more on the everyday life activities of people living in the city (Patterson, 2016). It is a framing of Toronto that emphasizes how especially distinct and diverse its neighborhoods are, as all cities after all already have neighborhoods (Hulchanski, 2011). The mosaic like approach to looking at the city has been further supported in The Star's indexing of neighborhoods or in the city's own tourism websites that provide for something to see in many of its different areas (although obviously not all 140 neighborhoods will be included as 'must see' nor are 'neighborhood rankings' particularly constructive). The formation of the BIAs have further emphasized the image of the distinctiveness of Toronto's neighborhoods (Buiani, 2020).

That this diversity so heralded is more complex than presented and not a universally positive experience, is reflected in the well-known report on the census by David Hulchanski (2011). The analysis of the census has provided insight into how the cultural differences mostly talked about in the multicultural or the neighborhood city disregard economic and other social elements and thus how the city had developed along a concerning trend. Hulchanski's report 'The three cities within Toronto' provides this much needed reflection on the social, economic, and ethnic status of people living in Toronto and how geographic location plays an important role. The three cities – the wealthy part, the middle-income section, and the poor component – developed from the 70s to the early 2000s to the extent that differences have become starkly apparent and continue to increase divides, notably along racial lines as well as economic status. The in-between middle class is moreover shrinking, hinting in some way not at a more complex composition of income classes and household types spread randomly throughout the city, but at the development of two distinct cities: an inner (incredibly) wealthy and mostly white city and

the surrounding, inner suburban, poor (and getting poorer) city that is 'multicultural'. The report is enlightening in understanding the dynamics within this (hyper)diverse city that is so often praised and what real consequences it has for certain racialized communities within the city (Ahmadi, 2018). Its projections into 2025 are a sobering counter-narrative to the celebration of diversity presented in other contexts: instead of consisting of three cities, Toronto will further move into two starkly polarized cities if no steps are undertaken to prevent this (Hulchanski, 2011, p. 27).

In the first two instances of multiplicity, it is easy for Toronto through these narratives to use slogans like 'diversity is our strength' or other such statements that acknowledge the multiplicity of the city without actually engaging in and understanding of what this means for people and their experiences within such a space (Pitter & Lorinc, 2016). It similarly would seem that both these approaches are more concerned with how these imaginations of Toronto extend outwards instead of reflecting inwards, thus concerning itself predominantly with how the city is viewed from the perspective of outsiders. To that goal Jay Pitter opens *Subdivided* (2016) by expressing how through an intersectional approach, which acknowledges that "various elements of our identities impact the way we navigate spaces, inequitable systems and social environment", this "requires us to acknowledge that our cities contain diversities within diversities within diversities" (2016, p. 9). The report from Hulchanski is one such way that provides a more complex image of the city as it takes into account these multiple layers of income disparity along racial and geographical lines that mark the city. As much as Toronto is thus a diverse city, it is also a polarized and divided city that has had a hard time addressing its issues and problems (Joy & Vogel, 2015). Rather, the 'diversity: our strength' slogan has

enabled its utilization of diversity as a de-politicized and marketable concept, and perhaps as a depthless surface (Ahmadi, 2018).

The three cities, the multicultural city, the hyper-diverse city, the city of neighborhoods; these imaginations all think about multiplicity in different terms either intersecting with culture, ethnicity, economic or social status to varying degrees of complexity and depths. It shows that considering a city layered or promoting it as being diverse is not necessarily doing a service to the realities of the places within which people live. It rather shows how certain narratives can stick. This research is not as much taking on the overall approach of the city to present a coherent narrative or image of Toronto, but sees how the urban imaginaries in the locations that will be discussed take on their own shapes and lives in disregard, contestation, or juxtaposition of what happens on the larger scale. However, these overarching patterns and trends need to be taken into account to be able to acknowledge the powers at play and the necessity for urban practices to engage with unequal access to housing, food, jobs, and other requirements to build a life in this city.

In the following I will shortly introduce each context and the material that will be used in the analysis to then delve into each place individually. Although they are first analyzed separately, at the end they will be brought together to entangle multiple urban imaginaries as they all contribute to an understanding of Toronto and what sense(s) of place(s) are formed as well as what role they plan in framing and experiencing the city.

Eglinton Avenue West – Little Jamaica

The first context to be introduced is that of Eglinton Avenue West, perhaps better known among its residents as Little Jamaica. Already since the 60s the area has been the part of Toronto where

people migrating from Jamaica or the rest of the Caribbean have settled (Gordon, 2018). The communities formed and the businesses built up following the migration waves, especially after Canada changed its migration laws, are still present and visible in Little Jamaica (CP Planning, 2021). The area's location is to some extent straightforward as it is centered around the stretch of Eglinton Avenue West that reaches East from Allen or Marlee Road all the way to Keele street. Along the way there are Caribbean restaurants, Black owned hair salons, music stores and more that represent the history and culture of various communities from Black diasporas. Although the history is deeply felt and community building appears to be strong, this part of the city has had to speak up loudly and work hard for the neighborhood to be recognized for its history and the heritage present there (Yazdani & Bruno, 2021; Saba, 2020; Edeh, 2020). The naming of Reggae Lane in 2015 as part of The Laneway Project is perhaps one victory, as well as the recent accepted motion to recognize the area as cultural district ('Reggae Lane', The Laneway Project; Yazdani & Bruno, 2021). However, this has gone paired with and is preceded by years of neglect and the lack of spending by the city government in services or other support for the neighborhood.

The community has developed through the years as the rest of Toronto did too, but it is especially in recent years that certain pressures have threatened the livelihoods of the businesses and the forming of communities. The Crosstown LRT plan, first presented in 2007, aims to expand on the public transport network, but has since been met with mixed responses. Connecting the neighborhood with the rest of the city is framed as beneficial, but the threat of rising rents for homes and businesses and the general risk of gentrification has spurred debate whether the people who live there now and who have their businesses will have to move out, thus are effectively displaced (Switzman, 2015). Besides the possibility of no longer being able

to live there as rents rise while the Crosstown further develops, the residents and business owners already struggle with the intense construction blocking traffic on the roads and sidewalks, inconveniencing the businesses further (Yazdani & Bruno, 2021). As the completion of the project has been postponed several times the strain on the neighborhood has increased with continued demands for compensation (Saba, 2020).

With these issues and potentials in mind, the past year the strip has seen organizations form and residents come together to provide a counternarrative to the noise of construction, the inevitability of gentrification and the neglect from the city. Various fundraising actions have and are taking place to support businesses and residents to pay their rent and support themselves following the pandemic. CP Planning (2021) and Black Urbanism TO et al., (2020) have worked with communities in the area to write in depth reports that provides a cultural mapping of Eglinton Avenue West and a report on conversations had with Black businesses. Along with it the Black Futures on Eglinton project has published a poetry book. The poems contributed by residents during a competition dealing with utopian or future imaginations of their Eglinton Avenue West, are one of the main materials to consider what urban imaginaries emerge in this part of Toronto. The research furthermore takes into account the report itself and looks at the changing streetscape of Little Jamaica to attend to these various imaginations and to explore what sense(s) of place(s) these might interact with.

Quayside

With pockets of underdeveloped land, sparse stretches of sandy beaches, derelict industrial areas, and the Modernist Ontario Place, it is hard to experience any coherence along the lakeside. It is interesting to see a waterfront so little developed following decades of waterfront projects in any

city that has some water and post-industrial sites to take on (Boland, et al., 2017). Although interest in the areas closest to the water has existed over the years, to some extent Google's plans to develop part of Quayside and it being chosen after Waterfront Toronto's RFP could have been a start of large-scale development. The ambitious plan (one of Google's first attempts at comprehensive urban planning) was presented as an innovative smart city, or a 'neighborhood of the future', which would work as an example to further develop Toronto and other cities (Sidewalk Labs). Proposed in 2017 the plan was quickly and intensely discussed and debated in media and academia alike. It found support and rejection, for example through the #Blocksidewalk campaign or in Richard Florida's more positive take on the potential of Sidewalk Labs (2019). Concerned with the extensive data collection by a corporate entity without engaging in public consultation or democratic processes of accountability, the campaign was critical of both Alphabet and the city that had agreed with the involvement of Google and the 'handing over' of publicly owned land (Mann et al., 2020).

While the plan had to be reconfigured especially with regards to data privacy, the encompassing and grand-scale plans continued until March 2020 brought the pandemic and an insecure economic future. This uncertain economy was quoted as the reason for withdrawal from the plans not much later (Doctoroff, 2020). Quayside thus sits unchanged, and Sidewalk Labs becomes, perhaps like the Spadina Expressway, an urban development project which could have changed Toronto drastically, but did not get to. Thus, as Stefan Novakovic (2020) writes "though there will never be postcards or awards or Instagram Stories for a neighborhood not built, its legacy will linger".

Reflecting on the sudden changes, there is an interesting point to be made about considering what exactly might linger from Sidewalk Labs or alternatively what its dominant

legacy might do by writing over other Quaysides that 'could-have-been' or that once were. Perhaps Quayside might remind one also of Tent City and the over 100 people who, after a while, were evicted from the site leaving it empty for eventually Sidewalk Labs to have the space to develop its plans (Gallant et al., 2004). To think about and through the urban imaginaries that Quayside has been engaged with, this research aims to not only look at the 'legacy' of Sidewalk Labs, but to consider what other (hi)stories there are of and can be for this place. Both these perspectives will be useful to reflect on the plans Google had proposed, some of its reception particularly after the cancellation was announced and many a writer pointed towards the 'lessons' to be learned and the more recent developments as the site is being prepared for new development. It furthermore reflects on the current physicality of the site and the potential of such open space that was among others benefited from by the people living in Tent City.

Three Sisters Garden along the Niwa'ah Onega'gaih'ih - Kobechenonk - the Humber River

Depending on what time of the year one visits the Humber River the landscape and its colors change drastically, but the water flowing past is a constant – even if the river has been constrained since urbanization of the river valley. It is after all the rivers that attracted people to this region, for thousands of years, as the Haudenosaunee, Anishinaabe and Huron-Wendat among others have lived and thrived with the rivers. As routes of trade and travel, the rivers have, like paths, brought many people together. It is in this sense that Toronto is thought of as the Meeting Place (Sanderson & Howard-Bobiwash, 1997). It is not only a meeting place for people living in this region for centuries, but also for (colonizing) settlers who have arrived only recently in the history of this place. Some of these histories have settled into the landscape,

others, like many of the creeks and rivers, have been covered up or forgotten. The identity of the city, or of its people, however, cannot be separated from the water that flows throughout.

Close to Taiaiako'n, (a Seneca village or 'village at the crossing' located in what is now better known as Baby Point), in a park named after a first settler to travel through this area, there is a Three Sisters Garden that "interrupts the singular and ahistorical landscape" of the leisure space of the Humber river and its paths (Kimari & Parish, 2020, p. 652). Depending on what time of the year you visit you may find the ground in waiting for warmer weather, or, if you are lucky, the Three Sisters in prosperous growth. Squash covers the ground, corn reaches up to the sun and beans twine around the stem of its sister. They stand not only in interruption of but also in connection with the landscape as the three plants rely on and work with the soil, air and, of course, water that is available to them. The garden is part of the Re-Sistering or Resisting project, a grassroots Initiative of Joce Two-Crows Tremblay, that re-Indigenizes the land and brings back the plants that once grew on the riverbanks back to its land (Taiaiako'n Historical Preservation Society, 2020).

To attend to the garden in the following pages the practice of Three Sisters gardening will not only be discussed, but also the stories around it as well as what farming practices in further detail do as part of urban imaginaries. The sense(s) of place(s) that might grow from this initiative provide an entirely different perspective on relations with the land, but even with regard to what the 'urban' might entail. This context moreover allows for the questions revolving around sense of place to fully engage with more-than-human becomings.

5. Eglinton - Speak It Up

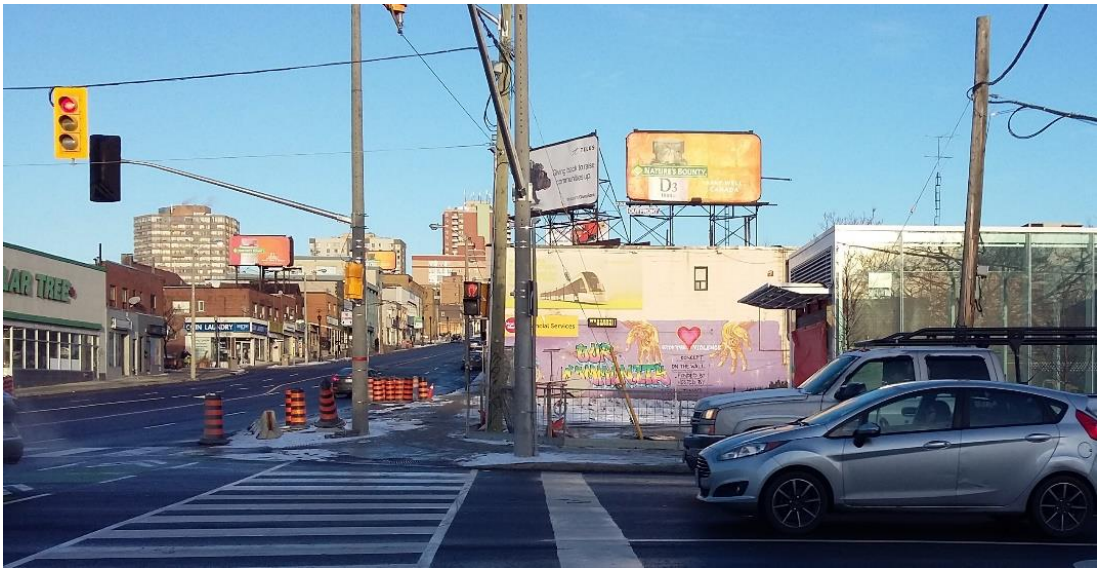

Figure 1. Taken at the intersection of Keele and Eglinton. One of the new glass entrances for the Keele stop is visible on the right, with a mural 'Our Community' next to it. Source: author.

To discuss the role of sense of place in the urban imaginaries of Eglinton Avenue West or Little Jamaica the following juxtaposes various visions of the neighborhood and its communities. It specifically takes from the poetry submitted to the competition from Black Futures on Eglinton that became part of CP Planning and Black Urbanism TO's cultural mapping of Little Jamaica. Locals were prompted to "explore, through creative writing, the challenges, futures, and aspirations of Black people" (CP Planning, 2021). Some of the poems were then later made into lyric videos with added visuals and performative components to the texts. These works provide futures, visions or lenses (the poem by Dorian Francois is called 'Black Lenses') not only on what Little Jamaica is or means to locals now, but also what it could or should be in the future. To that regard the choice of poetry to express these imaginations and to do so in addition to the report that discusses the study and recommendations that CP Planning and Black Urbanism TO

have gathered through their research, is an attest to the potential of creative thinking. Motion's poem 'Black Futures on Eglinton West' is the first in the report and is one of the works turned into a lyric video too. It opens as follows:

> Writers
>
> poets
>
> emcees
>
> scribes
>
> Write the story
>
> the future
>
> Eglinton West
>
> word to the sounds
>
> the sights
>
> the scents
>
> the colours
>
> the rhythms
>
> the accents
>
> Motion (CP Planning, 2021, p. 4)

The video sets the poem to the music by NON and introduces a beat that punctuates the lines above. It sets a tone for the project of Black Futures on Eglinton to not only 'write it down' but 'speak it up' too. The poem is an example of dub poetry, a performance focused form of poetry stemming from Caribbean origins set to a beat, often Reggae music. Lillian Allen, the well-known Toronto-based (dub)poet, writes about this type of creativity that it "validates the lives

and aspirations of those ignored and excluded from the dominant culture" and "it articulates a just vision of the future" (Allen, 1993, p. 17). Such intentions are found in the work presented here and in the following poems. They present that, as Jenny Burman describes in her analysis of Allen's work, "the language of vision and possibility evokes and provokes a future-directed politics in which art is an index of and a spark for the vital signs of urban movements against social injustice" (2002, p. 65).

This awareness of the potential of artistic expression and the ability to imagine beyond the dominant culture are what structure the following engagement with Little Jamaica and the processes of change at play there. The urban imaginaries as presented through the Black Futures on Eglinton project will be juxtaposed with other visions from various actors to further understand what sense(s) of place(s) are formed or how they interact in the urban landscape.

Mobility and Movement

Reflecting on diversity in Toronto, Eglinton Avenue West is a part of the city that has a higher proportion of Black residents (11%) than many other neighborhoods in Toronto (an average of 9%) (CP Planning, 2021). The concentration of Black communities in the area mostly follows the increase in migration since the 1960s and through the 80s, but as emphasized by the Black Futures on Eglinton Report, the neighborhood has had Black residents since the start of the 1900s (CP Planning, 2021). While the name Little Jamaica indicates the presence of people with Jamaican backgrounds other Caribbean origins found in the neighborhood range from Trinidad to Grenada (Ibid.). The presence of Black diasporas is also visible in the urban landscape specifically through a similarly high number of Black owned businesses along the strip. These Caribbean restaurants, corner stores, barbershops or music stores are not only frequented by people who live close by, but also attract customers from other parts of the city and visitors from

further away. The reggae music scene for example that developed around Eglinton Avenue West attracted well-known musicians like Bob Marley. Passing through Eglinton thus makes for an experience unlike any other part of Toronto. Jenny Burman (2001) writes the following to describe what the bus ride on the 32 line might be experienced like as one looks out the window:

> A collection of fragments-Port Royal restaurant, Sugar and Spice, Wisdom's, Gus's Tropical Foods (the sign reader might feel a tug of nostalgia for a 'tropics' she has never known), RAPID REMITTANCE, Natural Touch hair design-another flash of green, black, yellow, the colours of the Jamaican flag. Horns honk, Tre Stelle trucks block the road (there are many Italian businesses on this strip too), dancehall growls from Treasure Isle Records-smells like curry, then Pizza Pizza, then jerk, always with an exhaust undercurrent. (p. 196)

Burman further describes this as a 'synaesthetic experience', highlighting how Little Jamaica comes to the fore especially through its food and music, its sounds, smells, and tastes. Dionne Brand writes in a similar way in a passage in *Bread Out of Stone* (1994/2019) that details the experience of riding the Dundas or College street streetcars. As she listens to "the sound of voices changing in timbre, sibilances, assonances, cadences, breathiness, finally languages" (Brand, 1994, p. 187). Brand describes the encounters with people from various backgrounds and, although she uses speech and language, acknowledges that these differences are not only to be seen or heard. While both are linear imaginations of moving through space, Burman and Brand oppose a singular, cohesive, or universal idea of Toronto's culture.

Burman (2002) further describes in other work the affective geographies of the diasporic communities of Little Jamaica by looking specifically at remittances and the nostalgia or yearning connected to such transactions. These discussions of the diasporas illuminate the

movement already part of the social and cultural structures of Eglinton Avenue West. This background of migration should however not be considered a universal experience, as it would only play into the lack of complexity and depth that the image of Toronto as exceptionally diverse city portrays as mentioned earlier. As such the idea of a diasporic city is not just another way of presenting a diverse city, but is perceived by Burman as "constituted by displacement but also *emplacement* and consequently transformations" which "automatically complicates external orientations by engendering coeval and cospatial encounters and hybridized connections" (emphasis in original, 2002, p. 51). To acknowledge that Little Jamaica not only entails 'a Jamaicanness' or 'Caribbeanness' but a variety of Caribbean and diasporic identities and communities is thus necessary (Burman, 2001). In another sense Brand, in the case of Toronto or Canada more generally and for Burman specifically related to Eglinton West, are settings in which to experience a simultaneity or a layered and fluctuating sense of the city. Such changing relations are also taken on by one of the poems in the Black Futures on Eglinton report:

> 'The second change I noticed was the bus route – there was now a 32E which toured through the whole of Eglinton. Not only did this give tourists an opportunity to tour around and get to know the block but it also saved time. Everyone loved this new transit update.' ('Eg-West Has Heart', Dutchess Obanor in CP Planning, 2021).

Dutchess Obanor mentions the bus ride that Burman describes in her short essay on the changes she notices Little Jamaica has gone through in the 20 years since she last visited. A mall featuring Black culture, a faster bus line and a new community center for Black youth indicate positive transformations in the image Obanor provides. Her mention of tourists is perhaps not meant critically, but does add a critical note to the descriptions of Burman and the fine line between the 'consumption' of diversity in all its flavors, colors and sounds or actual engagement

and everyday encounters with difference. The acceptance of change is felt from Obanor's words.

The last line praising a new 32E bus line, however, brings in the currently (still) under construction LRT Crosstown. The use of a streetcar or bus ride is not only exemplary of the current composition of the city, but also of the imminent and rapid changes that some parts of Toronto are going through. For Eglinton in specific the description of the 32 bus ride stands perhaps in ironic juxtaposition with the development of new transit. Instead of passing by (as tourist or as local) the mosaic of storefronts that characterize Little Jamaica, the predominant form of transportation that is supposed to improve the neighborhood's connection with the rest of the city brings transport underground. While several steps have been made to make stations distinguishable and connect them with their location in specific neighborhoods, and the choice for a LRT underground is not based on wanting to avoid seeing the Little Jamaica neighborhood, it is still significant to notice this change.

The big scale developments lack of connection becomes even more apparent when looking at the first published plans and assessments (Taylor, 2020). The EGLINTONconnects planning study from 2014 that considers the entirety of the area of study (spanning 19 kilometers from Mount Dennis in the west to Kennedy in the east) does not mention specificities of any of the neighborhoods it is supposed to connect, let alone the area colloquially known as Little Jamaica. The plan is focused on enabling smoother transport (bike lanes, widening sidewalks, better public transport), greening the streetscape and densifying the built environment. The impact of such a large-scale project on local communities are not taken into account, nor are they adequately addressed in the plans to follow.

The disregard of the neighborhoods that make up the entirety of Eglinton Avenue from West to East in the environmental or impact assessments is not only a mistake in terms of

considering what constitutes these places at the moment of assessment, but also a lack of reflection on what the development's impact will be. EGLINTONconnects is specifically interested in what new residents it can attract, rather than who currently lives along the street and the to be transport line (Patel, 2016). The influence of public transport projects like the LRT Crosstown however can have significant outcomes for residents living close to new routes or stations as the new proximity to rapid urban transport increases the chances of further development interests, decrease in affordability of housing and thus also gentrification (Grube-Cavers & Patterson, 2015; Switzman, 2015). The related issues of affordability and gentrification were thus similar to the cultural significance of Little Jamaica not taken into account from the start of planning the LRT Crosstown. Rather, the increase in property value, the potential of making Eglinton into a 'destination' and the reeling in of new resident groups, were presented as positive outcomes in the plans and were generally supported during Metrolinx's public consultations (meetings with pre-dominant white crowds) (Patel, 2016).

Disappearance of Black spaces

The LRT Crosstown is thus a catalyst for what multiple researchers and local actors have called not just the disappearance but the erasure of Little Jamaica (Patel, 2016; Gordon, 2018; Taylor, 2020). Debbie Gordon (2018), in an extensive report on the role of design in the gentrification of Little Jamaica, places this erasure in alignment with other Black spaces that have disappeared through "neglect and purposeful erasure", such as Amber Valley in Alberta or Hogan's Alley in Vancouver (p. 1). The examples are however not limited to places outside of Toronto. Gordon also identifies the Grange neighborhood, Bathurst and Bloor and Regent Park as sites that have had to deal with or, in the last case, are dealing with similar processes. If threatened by demolition or by revitalization, these Black spaces and its Black communities disappear and get

displaced continuously.

Such erasure and perhaps place annihilation is especially pertinent if considered in relation to what Katherine McKittrick (2011) calls 'black sense of place'. The spaces she describes and situates the concept in include plantations, prisons and urbicide in the Americas, but it also deals with urbanity in a more general sense and the way that Blackness has been included or excluded from geographic thought. McKittrick posits that "a black sense of place can be understood as the process of materially and imaginatively *situating* historical and contemporary struggles against practices of domination *and* the difficult entanglements of racial encounter" (emphasis in original, 2011, p. 949). She emphasizes how very different spatial practices (from keeping black communities or cultures in place or characterizing them as placeless) shape a black sense of place and that the processes, systems, or power relations that "'structures' a black sense of place are the knotted diasporic tenets of coloniality, dehumanization, and resistance" (2011, p. 949). It is then not so much the question if the changes happening in Little Jamaica are in line with these patterns of dispossession, racial violence, and a denial of sense of place. Rather, the discussion can revolve not around a settling in inside versus outside of us versus them perspectives, but to consider 'co-operative efforts' (McKittrick, 2011: p. 960).

These contexts provide a complicated future for Eglinton Avenue West, especially as Black Futures on Eglinton reports that from 2006 to 2016 the neighborhood population went down 5% while the number of Black residents declined 13% (2021, p. 15). In that same time span the average price for a home has increased 66% while the average income per household has only gone up by 10%. While these processes are not reflecting the most recent influence of the LRT Crosstown nearing (or crawling towards) completion, it is still a striking development

that shows some of the dynamics that are already changing the area and could only be exacerbated by further gentrifying processes. Businesses along the street have also reported rent increases and struggle to stay in place as speculating landlords play into the development potentials of an Eglinton Avenue West that has a completed LRT Crosstown (Black Urbanism TO et al., 2020). It is not just the pressure that comes from the anticipation of a finished new public transport route but also the actual construction work that has made it harder for businesses to stay open. The extensive disruption from the LRT construction (which often resulted in the actual covering up of Black presence in the neighborhood as stores became almost inaccessible nor visible) along with recent closures and increased risk because of the pandemic, has brought about a very uncertain futures for most businesses.

The elements as described above provide a narrative pre-dominantly defined by displacement and of the inevitability of development and gentrification. While communities have found some recognition in the neighborhood, can find services catered to them, as well as food that might remind them of home or of parents cooking, this diasporic place so entwined with other places, is also at risk of being 'lost' or threatened by the changes proposed by the city and instigated by private developers. Eglinton Avenue West as Little Jamaica might be painted over by newer, greener, more bicycle-friendly infrastructure and buildings in a near future. This vision of what could be a new layer of this part of Toronto would fit in seamlessly with other neoliberal approaches to city planning (Patel, 2016). Making the area 'a better place' would then mostly be about making it fit in with the idea of a streamlined, coherent city, which negates the difference not only of Black cultures, but also of the social and economic experience of these communities. However, while the writing over of Little Jamaica is happening, there are also voices from the communities and from organizations paying attention to these (unjust) transformations that

emphasize that this is a place worth protecting or saving and that it is necessary to do so (DePradine, 2020; Yazdani & Bruno, 2021).

Brick by Brick

The previous discussion has shown that while Eglinton is particular and distinct from other places in Toronto, it is also at threat of being erased for what would be a much more homogenized vision of the avenue. Rather than making the city into a more variegated landscape or palimpsest, it is in a way aiming at 'smoothing over' some of its layers. These layers here in Little Jamaica are ones constituted through movement and displacement, but beyond the practices of moving and transit, the built environment and the built communities shape the sense of this neighborhood just as much. Hassan Abdallah writes in 'Brick by Brick':

> Irony
> We tore down our walls
> To build a community
> Brick by brick
> A foundation predicated on unity

The metaphor of building and the choice for bricks to represent the slow and labor involved process comes back several times in other contributions too. Ms. Faith, or Iman Turner, similarly writes 'about a community built / from the energies we bring / leaving Black countries for Canada' and continues to use the act of building to describe how people 'built each other up', that there was a continuous 'building of vibes' to the city that 'denied building transit in 1995' (CP Planning, 2021, p. 28 – 29). Both Abdallah and Ms. Faith emphasize here the building of social infrastructure as opposed to or in addition to the built environment. The importance and possibilities of such networks of connectivity have been especially prominent in the past year as

protests and fundraisers have been organized in support of the Black communities of Eglinton West, either in relation to the economic support needed for local businesses or for demand for social justice and the acknowledgement of Little Jamaica's heritage. The acts of solidarity and the taking of responsibility for caring for these communities and places has been especially visible since the start of the pandemic with various fundraisers being shared and supported widely to provide rent relief to residents and support to the businesses on Eglinton Avenue (Eg West Tenant Relief GoFundMe & Black Business Grants for Toronto's Eglinton West GoFundMe). These networks of care mostly existing online and being shared on social media, perhaps provide another layer of community care that can be given to keep Little Jamaica intact and to perhaps help it flourish. These fundraisers, protests and marches are not isolated events or just acts of kindness, rather it shows the tendency for care and solidarity, but also of the struggle for these relations, value, and potentials of Little Jamaica to be acknowledged by the City government.

The focus on social infrastructure, on community building, Black culture and experiences and immaterial connections present in the neighborhood are also what inform the work of Black Urbanism TO and CP Planning. Their reports and their visions for Little Jamaica engage with these various topics in the material imaginaries of the space, but also in the organizational structures needed to support these visions. The Black Futures on Eglinton report for example states as its first step to implementation the need to "be purposeful about engaging Black residents in work and studies that will shape the culture of the neighborhood" (CP Planning, 2021, p. 32). Such a goal includes necessary reflection on how this participation is set up and how the process also involves thinking about how best to create a comfortable and welcome space for Black residents (CP Planning, 2021). Second, the report presents the need to fund

Black led organizations that work "to maintain and develop community assets that confront systemic anti-Black racism" (CP Planning, 2021, p. 33). This implementation not only enables people who already know more about and are attuned to the relations in Little Jamaica to share their knowledge, but also for this vision to support Black leadership. The last implementation step connects with the previous one as it aims to ensure that Black consultants are hired who provide continued support to the community and contribute an understanding of the cultural assets of the neighborhood (CP Planning, 2021, p. 34). The Black Futures on Eglinton report besides its 'vision statement' encourages actual steps to be undertaken through its implementation and action strategies as outlined above. Similarly, the business conversations report from Black Urbanism TO offers the city an overview of various issues and recommendations from the re-naming and re-branding of the neighborhood to acknowledge the Caribbean cultures that shape the area and its people to properly providing support for businesses struggling as a result of the LRT construction, more general gentrification processes and the specifics of the pandemic (Black Urbanism TO et al., 2020, p. 41). Some of these recommendations also come back in the future vision of Little Jamaica Black Urbanism presents in the report. While paying attention to the need for affordable housing and densification, it also imagines a streetscape that visibly celebrates and emphasizes the 'cultural strengths' of Eglinton West.

The goals and intentions of these reports in providing in depth analysis of the impacts of urban development, gentrification, and racism, ground the new visions. Additionally, the work from CP Planning, Black Urbanism TO and of its collaborators in researching, writing, and contributing to the reports, is also exemplary in rethinking the way that urban planning or urbanists can approach Toronto. Anna Livia Brand writes "plan making is imagining" and that

"it is a pronouncement of inclusion and exclusion" (2018, p. 271). While Livia Brand acknowledges that planning is 'packed to the rafters' with the white spatial imaginary, and recognizes the importance of naming whiteness and its working within urban planning, she also emphasizes the importance of vision and remarks that "for the planning futures to be different, they have to be full to the rafters with non-white, non-supremacist imaginations" (Livia Brand, 2018, p. 271). The work of organization like CP Planning, Black Urbanism TO and the networks they have created within the city and into City Hall continue to place Black spaces and Black geographies at the center and celebrate these understandings of a neighborhood. They do this perhaps in what Johnathan Metzger (2014a) sees as the potential of 'caring for place' in urban planning practices as "ethicopolitical inclination that can lead to good things" (although dependent on the many components that make up such relations) (p. 1001). Like an investigation of the white spatial imaginary or the Black imaginaries, this care for place should engage with a (self-)reflexivity on urban planning, which it does not often do in other contexts (Metzger, 2014a; Livia Brand, 2018).

The caring for Little Jamaica and the taking of the matter into their own hands has not only attracted media interest especially in the past few weeks, but also finally has resulted in the City paying attention. At the start of March 2021 as the motion from councilor Matlow was moved to pass, the government has made steps to take up its responsibility in support of the neighborhood by aiming to sustain it financially, but also culturally (Matlow, 2020). A study of the area of Little Jamaica and/or the Eglinton west corridor has recently been initiated to "determine how best to support businesses on Eglinton Avenue West; develop a local planning framework to guide growth and future development along Eglinton Avenue West and surrounding neighborhoods; and create and designate a Caribbean and West Indies-focused

cultural district" (City of Toronto, 2021). The project has asked citizens to get involved in shaping these further changes and held its first public meeting. However, the response has been mixed, with reports indicating that not enough space for citizens to share their ideas was available. Another matter for confusion was the use of the term 'cultural district' which has not yet been defined, and thus is not as much an actionable designation unlike heritage conservation districts (Samuel, 2021). The City has determined the heritage status to not fit Little Jamaica, and while its reasoning that this decision is based on agreement from the community is vague at best, the use of cultural district already stems from the motion introduced by councilor Matlow in the fall of 2020 (Ibid.; Matlow, 2020). As such the interest from the City might lead to some relief for business owners and residents, but is no guarantee for careful implementation of the recommendations from Black Urbanism TO and CP Planning or of other in-depth studies that carefully attune to the needs and desires of Black communities in the area and allow space for Black spaces to thrive. Further reflection on the City's work and that of the activists and organizations that have been attending to the neighborhood for much longer will show what Eglinton Avenue West will be for now and after the LRT construction finally ends. The disappearance of Little Jamaica is however not easily accepted, and people have come together to provide alternative visions. Some of these are hopeful too. Perhaps there is some hope in considering like Honey Novick what being able to stay in Little Jamaica might mean:

> I stayed in the "hood"
> and ate in the hood and shopped in the hood
> buying colourful, flowing clothes
> and was happy smelling memories
> and knowing new beginnings are seeds

that have sprouted and need to be nurtured

this is my community

this music beats in my blood

this spirit is my teacher

the world is what I make of it

(CP Planning, 2021, p. 23).

6. Quayside

Figure 2. View towards Quayside, with on the right a close to completion construction and crane indicating more work in the background. Victory Mill Soya silos are clearly visible in the background. Source: author.

As mentioned before the waterfront of Toronto does not have a particularly coherent structure. Although some big scale urban developments have been undertaken or were about to, the areas along the lake are as diverse as can be, not only in terms of functions but also in terms of architecture and aesthetics. Exhibition place's neo classicist arches stand in contrast with Ontario Place's modernist domes, (post)industrial areas in the Lower Don Lands lead to Cherry Beach, and so on. Similarly, the projects that have not happened are as diverse and speak to the possibilities of what the waterfront could have been or could be in the future. The Jane Jacobs backed 70s Harbour City or, of course now too, Sidewalk Labs are just two examples of plans that were fully planned and did not get to make it to the construction step. These (un)built environments and the current urban landscape contribute to the ways in which the waterfront has, as Carr and Hesse (2020b) sum up, "been settled, stolen, bought, sold, drained, dredged, filled,

polluted, cleaned-up, channelled, industrialized, abandoned, re-naturalized, festivalized and reshaped continuously" (p. 73). If not only throughout colonizer settlement and development, the land itself has changed dramatically with the shorelines of what was Lake Iroquois taking centuries to transform into what is now the waterfront of Lake Ontario (Hardwicke & Reeves, 2008). Besides processes without human intervention changing the shape of the shores and islands, lake fills have further determined what can now be considered the waterfront of Toronto (Ibid.). Throughout the city's development the waterfront has remained a crucial space for that change (Carr & Hesse, 2020b).

While international interest from urban planners had already focused on Toronto's waterfront, the announcement of Google's plans for Sidewalk Labs is what made a much wider audience tune in to about 3 years of back and forth between Waterfront Toronto, Sidewalk Labs, Google, government on all levels, citizens and more. Bringing up specifically Sidewalk Labs in this thesis is perhaps reinforcing the attention the project has gotten over the years, but, as the next section will show, there is a lot that can be learned from the controversy surrounding Sidewalk Labs, the responses from the public, city government, and the organizations proposing the smart city concept for Toronto. Moreover, like the other (big scale) urban developments that might have happened on the waterfront, Sidewalk Labs will continue to influence what happens next either in this location beside the lake or more broadly in terms of smart city processes that the city might engage in. The next section not only considers the project in itself, but relates to other imaginaries of the place and reflects on the way Google's vision has so dominated the waterfront.

Smart Urban (Waterfront) Development

Sidewalk Labs Toronto and Quayside in general are sites in the city that connect with a variety of dominant strategies and visions for contemporary city development and planning. Narratives around waterfront development, smart cities, the shift to urban governance, or post-political urban governance to just name a few, influence the way that the lakefront is being shaped. Not only Sidewalk Labs but also other projects around it such as Daniel's Waterfront City of the Arts or the Port Lands redevelopment around the Don, are entangled in the ways that cities, developers, or companies approach the city and its (re)building. These developments, renewals, revitalizations, or other terms that the projects might take on, are thus not just urban imaginaries specific to Toronto, but tie in with the shift towards neoliberal urban planning and development. As expressions of what Neil Brenner and Nik Theodore call "actually existing neoliberalism", they are embedded within other contexts "insofar as they have been produced within national, regional, and local contexts defined by the legacies of inherited institutional frameworks, policy regimes, regulatory practices, and political struggles" (Brenner & Theodore, 2002, p. 351). From these perspectives the drive behind urban development is shaped by a perceived need to compete on a global playing field, to accommodate market-driven practices and consumption patterns and further the dominant neoliberal ideology behind it (Brenner & Theodore, 2002). With this in mind urban development projects can be characterized by processes like institutional thickness which often compromises transparency and accountability (enabling public-private partnerships), a tendency for fragmented projects instead of planning and reframing of cities through city branding and place-marketing (Swyngedouw et al., 2002; Weber, 2002). The tenets of market rationality, privatization, competition, depoliticization, individualism and more come up in various components of city planning and in different locations within the urban landscape.

Throughout the years certain narratives or sites have especially been encapsulated by these ideologies such as in the case of the creative city narrative (Banks & O'Connor, 2017), waterfront development (Boland et al., 2017) or the smart city.

Although these views and characterizations deal mostly with economic and political issues, it does provide context to the way that the urban imaginaries presented in the following chapter, and the ones already discussed or to be discussed, are entangled in these networks as much as they might oppose them too. Toronto, after all, has not been immune to the trends and tendencies in contemporary urban planning. This can be noticed in its change in urban policy or municipal restructuring over the past decades moving towards neoliberal paradigms (see Fanelli, 2016) or in the more specific mainstreaming of the creative city into neoliberal approaches (McLean, 2017; 2018) or (sustainable) waterfront development (Desfor & Laidley, 2011; Bunce, 2009). While there have been shifts throughout and changes as the approaches adapt, Quayside and Sidewalk Labs (as being located on the waterfront, pertaining a smart city vision for Toronto, being initiated by a private company and so forth) falls directly at the intersection of various of the elements discussed above.

However, in all its 'real life' implications, it must be said that Sidewalk Labs did not happen and thus did not materialize beyond a bright blue container office where visitors could share post-it's to 'participate' in Google's vision (Mattern, 2020). While its extensive masterplan of over 1500 pages might give some concrete ideas on how to actualize the ambitious intentions of innovation, sustainability, ubiquitous connectivity and so on, it has mostly been a vision presented in elaborate planning documents and visually appealing renderings of what the newly built landscape would look like. These images widely shared by media should not be underestimated in their influence on public opinion or in shaping the debate.

Rather, as Nick Dunn (2018) writes "the role of imagination is fundamental to processes of conceptualization, envisioning and performing urban futures" (p. 375). In his categorizing of six dominant visual paradigms of urban imaginaries (regulated cities, layered cities, flexible cities, informal cities, ecological cities, hybrid cities) Dunn argues for a need to imagine more – in plurality and with a potential for antagonism – of these visions. The smart city falls in these categories (which Dunn reminds the reader are not set and merely provide insight in the convergence into several dominant imaginaries) within that of the hybrid city (Dunn, 2018). This hybridity is one of the elements that will be taken into account in further discussing Sidewalk Labs.

Smart City Narratives

The predominant narrative that has been brought in relation with Sidewalk Lab is that of the smart city, even if it intersects with other imaginaries too. Although the analysis will not delve only and entirely into the expression of smart city narratives in the project it is helpful to reflect briefly on tendency of many city governments, tech corporations and other actors to invest in, participate and promote smart city visions. Much like many other categories or terms in the contemporary development of cities, the smart city does not have one straight forward definition to present, but rather is interpreted and realized in a variety of forms without clear consensus on what it entails (Burns et al., 2021; Houston et al., 2019; Shelton et al., 2015). An example of a general understanding of the paradigm considers smart cities "as both the urban planning and administration project of embedding digital technologies into the urban fabric, and a reconfiguration of digital urban economies" (Burns et al., 2021, p. 463). Its implementation and results are said to have effect on various components of city life. Two directions these goals might go focus on the one hand, on how smart city solutions can make the urban more efficient

or sustainable and claim, on the other hand, that it can introduce new ways for citizens to participate in politics and governance (Houston et al., 2019, p. 846). To what extent these goals can be reached, or if it merely turns citizens into passive participants as data-producing actors, depends on the projects and contexts (Tenney et al., 2020).

Besides the more specific technological details of how these smart cities are aimed to develop, the general approach taken revolves around a need for innovation and the embracing of intelligence or smart-ness which could be related to things like transport network or garbage pick-ups and more. To want to make a city smart(er) and more efficient is not generally something one would go against, especially as it is presented as something that serves the public (Tenney et al., 2020). However, in the case of Sidewalk Labs and in other locations around the globe, the smart city narrative has taken a contested place in public debate. The promises and visions of smart city planning in that regard are often in practice highly criticized. Such discrepancies that exist between the presentation of ambitious plans and the 'actually existing smart city' that necessarily responds to situated contexts in its built form, provide insights into the complexity of the debate and the narrative itself (Shelton et al., 2015).

The following discussion concerns itself both with the specifics of Sidewalk Labs while also reflecting on some of the pitfalls and potentialities of smart cities in general. The aim is not to take on the entirety of the 1500-page document that lays out Google's vision of a smart city on the Torontonian waterfront, but rather to pinpoint several details of its urban innovations, its reception, and the aftermath of the withdrawal in 2020.

Sidewalk Labs

Although the full Master Innovation and Development Plan was only released in the spring of 2019, the partnership between Alphabet Inc., part of Google, and Waterfront Toronto, an

organization created by three levels of public governing bodies, was already introduced in October of 2017. Early on the project and the partnership between Waterfront Toronto and Sidewalk Labs was marked by unclarity as to the specifics of the agreement and their working relationship. The news, however, was discussed internationally and from that point onwards Sidewalk Labs has been part of widespread debate amongst journalists, researchers, decision makers and the public. The topics have varied from its organizing structures and integration in the Toronto government structures, to the issue of privacy for its data mining and the lack of actual participation of future residents in the project.

The vision for the 12-acre site at Quayside is extensive and includes mass timber architecture, affordable housing projects, smart waste management, heated pavements and pedestrian and cyclist focused urban landscapes (Sidewalk Labs, 2019). Presented in striking renderings from architectural global star firms like Snøhetta and with evocative language in its long winding plans, Sidewalk Labs to a certain extent presented what a seamless, more efficient, economically vital, and sustainable Toronto waterfront could look like. Although it does use adjectives like innovative, intelligent, or smart repeatedly, the plans do not necessarily situate Sidewalk Labs in a smart city narrative. Rather, when it does mention smart cities, it uses it to distinguish Sidewalk Labs from those practices for example by stating that its expression of urban innovation goes "beyond the mere pursuit of urban efficiencies associated with the 'smart cities' movement, towards a broader set of digital, physical, and policy advances that enable government agencies, academic, civic institutions, and entrepreneurs both local and global to address large urban challenges" (Sidewalk Labs Vol. 1, 2019, p. 304). Some of the processes it sees as part of this 'going beyond smart cities' entail ubiquitous connectivity, the inclusion of urban labs and experimentation, sensing technology and digital fabrication (Sidewalk Labs Vol.

1, 2019, p. 464).

It is moreover, as Dan Doctoroff CEO of Sidewalk Labs, has presented a thought experiment that asks “what would a city look like if your started from scratch in the internet era – if you built a city ‘from the internet up’?” (2016). That Quayside supposedly provided a blank slate for Google to develop, plan and experiment on and that it wanted to go much further beyond the 12 acres initially agreed on, shows not only the tendency for (over)ambition but also for a disregard of considering Quayside not as a tabula rasa, but as already holding potentials for futures and traces of the past. While the masterplan does start with a land acknowledgement and mentions Indigenous peoples interaction with the land, engages with the industrial heritage of the area, highlights the theme of “build on what has been done” and makes a grand effort of integrating the timber industry in its architecture, the interactions with the site are still limited (Sidewalk Labs, Vol. 0, 2019, p. 81). Especially in its presentation of Quayside as ‘untapped’ and ‘underutilized’ it allows for easy agreement that something done to renew or revitalize will certainly be improving the area. It brings this discussion to one striking visual element of Quayside that has not been ignored by Sidewalk Labs but integrated into its vision.

Victory Soya Mills Silos

Figure 3. David Colangelo and Patricio Davila's *Tent City Projection* at ArtSpin 2014 screened on the Victory Soya Mills silos. Source: Maggie Chan.

The site where Sidewalk Labs would have been built is not empty, but while other parts of the waterfront are being developed, the site is particularly grey in comparison. Alphabet's bright blue container still stands on its corner, but with construction surrounding it, hefty trucks parked around it and the already and always present Gardiner Express Highway behind it, it is not really the focal point it could have been. At this part of Toronto's sprawling lakeside, the Victory Soya Mills Silos are perhaps the more distinct marker. It is no surprise that Sidewalk Labs imaginaries integrated this landmark into its plans. Although located adjacent to the site, the Silos feature

multiple times specifically through the conceived ‘Silo Park’ a “5000-square-metre park across from the Victory Soya Mills silos” which would “serve as the green and recreational heart of the community” (Sidewalk Labs, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 79). The now no longer in use grain elevators “would stand in silent testimony” to the industrial past of Quayside (Sidewalk Labs, Vol. 1, 2019, p. 27). Using the concrete structures to frame the visuals of a revitalized industrial area might to some extent be an acknowledgement of its value, at the same time it is able to provide a sanitized version of the industrial city that does not seem to repurpose the silos in any way but to make them (silently) stand out and stand for the past.

The same tall, grey silos have been used in a 2014 architectural projection from Dave Colangelo and Patricio Davila as part of Art Spin 5th Annual Exhibition (figure 3). Instead of placing the structures in the background, attention throughout the projection was focused on the silos. However, not to tell the story of an industrial past, but to present the story of Marty Lang, a resident of what was known as Tent City. Formed in 1998 Tent City, located on a property owned by Home Depot, became a place where up to a 100 people found a temporary home by 2002 when in the fall the entirety of Tent City was evicted. Although it started out small (Lang tells in his story how he was the 13th person to move in) the encampment grew to be much bigger as more people found their way to the site and either set up tents, built their own constructions to live in or inhabited prefab houses brought in by organizations (Gallant et al., 2004). With support from outside organizations such as the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee the squatters for some periods of time had access to generators for electricity and organized themselves to keep Tent City going, among other ways by keeping police out (Crowe, 2007). The community living on the empty lands along the waterfront fought for housing rights at city hall, requesting better shelter conditions, more beds, permanent housing or at some points the reallocation of Tent City

to city owned land (Connolly, 2002).

Marty Lang's story not only reflects the workings of the camp and its growing number of residents, but also the day of eviction in September 2002. Home Depot evicted the 100 or so squatters without prior notice, nor much time to pack their belonging or to search for a place to stay the coming night (Crowe, 2007). Lang describes it as the worst day of his life, an experience that echoes off the silos with intensity.

While the organizations that had supported the inhabitants of Tent City up until then were able to offer emergency accommodation, this was not sufficient in providing relief to Tent City residents. Through work with the city as initiated through the Emergency Homelessness Pilot Project (EHPP) and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) programs were set up to provide rent supplements and in extension housing. In the end, and by hard work, most of the former residents chose for and were eligible to enter permanent housing, marking a significant victory for housing rights (see Gallant et al., 2004 for a more extensive report on the EHPP).

Colangelo and Davila's work is not only a reminder of this story of displacement, it seems to do the opposite of what Sidewalk Labs does in framing the Victory Soya Mills Silos as 'silent testimony' to an industrial past. The projecting of maps, drawings, Marty Lang's words, and the juxtaposition of the narration during the screening are not just a clear layering of various (hi)stories, but also give the impenetrable concrete structures more 'to do' than to just stand in silence. It does however not disregard what the silos bring to the landscape on their own. What is clear when looking at the map overlayed on the grey walls, is how the stories connect. People found a place to stay in this part of Toronto because it was left to its own devices or abandoned, and they could for some time stay since it was fairly out of sight of downtown Toronto and because Home Depot was not yet developing an already valuable site (Connolly, 2002). It could

thus be argued that the silos are not just functioning as a screen upon which Marty Lang's story, and that of the other residents of Tent City, are projected but that these surfaces or layers interact much in the same way as when people still lived in Tent City. In that regard the silos are not just the testimony but the witnesses themselves in this case, as companions to the squatters.

The juxtaposing of the two different interpretations of or connections made with the Victory Soya Mills silos is not just presented here to demonstrate a multiple and relational understanding of Quayside, but also to reflect on the need for affordable housing in the city. While Sidewalk Labs did include plans for housing project for low-income households, it remains the question to what extent it would have truly been integrated in the actualizing of the project. There is however a very actual and real need for affordable housing. The similarities of Tent City with situations in the city currently are striking. Almost 20 years later there are still many issues with the shelter system, especially during a pandemic. Moreover, the prefab houses brought to Quayside to help house the residents during cold winters are reminiscent of the small wooden structures built with care by Khaleel Seivwright, against which the city has placed an injunction (Cecco, 2021).

Cracks in the Sidewalk Labs

Where the Victory Soya Mills provide a palimpsestic glimpse into other imaginaries of the waterfront, Sidewalk Labs itself had already been showing 'cracks' (Skok, 2019). The project had to bear criticism from all sides about a variety of topics, dealt with resignations an extended project area and then got reigned in to go back to the 12 acres that first were presented in the RFP (Goodman & Powles, 2019). The problems that arose throughout the development of the plans and further partnership between Alphabet, Waterfront Toronto and the city reflected to varying degrees on privacy issues with regards to data collection, distrust in the organizing

structures, and the general tendency for smart city narratives to turn into forms of surveillance capitalism (Mann et al., 2020; Goodman & Powles, 2019). The streamlined image presented in the master plan or as expressed by representatives of Sidewalk Labs or even supporters of the project, thus had quite some flaws.

The cracks which already started to appear early on might also be conceptualized in a more extensive complication of smart city visions as explored by Houston et al. (2019). In their work the emphasis shift from seamless functioning to the break downs that happen when smart cities are put to the test especially in relation to citizen engagement. The many sensory practices and sensors that are part of Sidewalk Labs and other smart city frameworks, are often neatly located within the projects as they are perceived as "monolithic and automated systems" (Houston et al., 2019, p. 859). The maintenance work needed to keep these (in)visible infrastructures working is generally not expanded upon or even obscured. In the case of problems, the "indeterminacy, complexity, and contingency of breakdowns in the city will always exceed the systems in place to anticipate or react to disorder" (Houston et al., 2019, p. 864). Citizen sensing, for example in projects that test air quality, provides ways of rethinking these infrastructures and the relations of people to the process of maintenance as well as the actual technology and sensors. The authors thus acknowledge the potential for technology to form new understandings or ways of thinking around urban space, they also suggest that "ad hoc, contingent and open-ended processes of urban sensing practice and technologies are a crucial part of these transformations" (Houston et al., 2019, p. 865).

Sidewalk Labs does mention some of the maintenance needed to keep especially smart transport and waste management working, but this level of care for or attuning to is not done in relation to the ubiquitous connectivity or the ever present sensing needed to collect data. Beyond

sharing post-it notes or participation in consultations (Mattern, 2020), the future residents or visitors of Sidewalk Labs are not expected to actively participate in its sensing practices. Rather, with focus shifted away from the technology itself, it does not encourage citizen engagement as much as it lets people passively 'participate' by collecting data with questions of consent being a second thought (Tenney et al., 2020). The lack of engagement, but also a much broader context in which there is little oppositional debate, the plans can also be framed as linking closely to the condition of the post-political (Carr & Hesse, 2020b).

The movement between claims of enabling participation and important roles for citizens stands in contrast with critiques on how Sidewalk Labs is part of post-political entanglements (Carr & Hesse, 2020b), while the integration of technological sensors and citizen sensing does also hold the potential of reconfiguring these relations (Houston et al., 2019). The lack of care or maintenance work taken into account of the planning of Sidewalk Labs and in its approaching of the city government or other organizations it needed to work with, to a certain extent resulted in the inability for Alphabet to repair the cracks that had started to form.

Lessons Learned

With Sidewalk Labs withdrawal from its plans in May of 2020, it has not ended the conversation around the project, its organization, the site itself, and the ideologies of smart cities. Rather, the debate taking place in the aftermath has continued as people reflect not only on the development particularities, but on the reasons for dropping the plans Alphabet Inc. and Waterfront Toronto had worked on for almost 3 years, or the mistakes made. This level of reflection has also given rise to a multitude of articles written on the lessons that can be learned from the whole situation. Even without the smart city project breaking ground, the focus is still on the knowledge and intelligence gathered from it even if it will no longer be relevant for Sidewalk Labs in Toronto.

Some of these lessons were already being learned as controversy amounted upon debates (Goodman & Powles, 2019), but especially in the months following Google's abandonment of its plans these learning possibilities have been stacking up (Naafs, 2020; Carr & Hesse, 2020b; Saba, 2020; Kavanagh, 2020; Skok, 2020; etc.). These lessons range from thoughts on how Alphabet failed to understand the local way of doing politics after being used to a New York context (Lorinc, 2020) to "when you hold a photo op with political leaders, have something concrete to announce" (Skok, 2020) or more general considerations of what aspects of the project were not so bad. Waterfront Toronto's website even has a FAQ included that asks, 'what lessons did Waterfront Toronto learn from working with Sidewalk Labs?' only to provide no insight in the knowledge gained. The website states that "the last three years of the Quayside project has provided a great deal of insight into the possibilities that could be generated through innovative city-building" and that "the lessons we learned, along with insight from the public, external experts, and our government partners will all be considered as we define next steps for the project" (Waterfront Toronto, 'Q&A').

As one of the main components of Alphabet's urban imaginary revolved around innovation and experimentation (for example in its ideas of using various labs), it seems that the entire process itself has been the experiment too. The focus on learning or becoming 'smart' has not necessarily worked for Sidewalk Labs but has set some precedents for what is to come next. If the abandonment of the project is considered as a cautionary tale (Carr and Hesse, 2020a) or if it is considered a loss for the city's development potential, or simply a victory to have blocked Google from developing its idea of smart sidewalks.

However, what is certain, is that Quayside will have other plans and opportunities presented to it especially since the sites around what would have been Sidewalk Labs have

already been developing in the past few years too. Novakovic (2020) points out how “Quayside and the Port Lands are hardly left for dead” as various (big scale) projects have been underway, specifically around the Port Land and the Don River where neighborhoods are to be developed, sustainable waterways should be revitalized, and new green space will emerge. The interest in developing, renewing, or revitalizing Quayside is certainly there, thus it seems unlikely that the site will not be transformed within the next few years.

Waterfront Toronto has to that goal recently published a new international competition to find its future development partner along with a plan for a section of Parliament Slip. While it has held a public consultation in October 2020 and has reached out for citizen engagement through a public survey, social media, and a Q&A session, it has also once again turned to a competition scheme and to potentially international architecture firms with global appeal. Its approach might be more careful. The competition is in its first step only a Request for Qualifications and differs from the outline given back in 2017 before Google was presented as partner. Much like previous calls and visions, it aims to be dynamic, inclusive, and resilient, but refrains from homing in on technological innovations. Rather, its already proposed vision for Parliament Slip shows a project focused on ‘reorienting the city towards the lake’ through leisure and entertainment such as kayaking, swimming, boating, and dining on the water (Waterfront Toronto, Backgrounder: Parliament Slip, 2021). Perhaps returning to the basics of a waterfront and aiming to reconnect with the lake will turn the tide for Quayside. In the meantime, and until another vision settles in, much of the debate will probably still return to Sidewalk Labs and what it could or should have been.

7. Re-Sistering and Resisting Project

Toronto is not normally to be considered a city of rivers, rather Lake Ontario has more clearly been the body of water that has been part of the city's imagery. However, as the previous discussion has already shown, the waterfront, while being the site for some big developments, nor has it been fully or coherently developed. Still Toronto does not have the same connection with its rivers as cities like Paris and the Seine or London and the Thames or Cairo and the Nile. It should however not be surprising that the city has certainly been formed by the rivers that flow through it currently or used to ten, hundreds or thousands of years ago. As much as Lake Ontario and the former Lake Iroquois have left traces in the landscape still noticed today, the rivers have done so too (Freeman, 2008; Hardwicke & Reeves, 2008). In recent years, a newfound or emphasized interest in the rivers has brought attention to the 'lost rivers' and the many creeks that have been buried as Toronto further developed (with Garrison Creek perhaps being the most well-known example (Brown & Storey, 2008; 1996)) as well as the area surrounding the main waterways such as the Don River Valley that is now being subjected to redevelopment. The Humber on the other side of the city has moreover for a long time been an oft-used recreation area where trails, paths, parks and quite some golf parks provide respite from the city. Among its privately owned and publicly shared green spaces, the river also leads to a small area in so-called Etienne Brulé Park where the Re-Sistering Project is growing corn, beans, and squash as part of the Three Sisters garden and sage and other herbs as part of a medicinal garden.

The garden is a project from Joce Two-Crows Tremblay an Earthworker and member of the Taiaiako'n Historical Preservation Society initiated in 2019 (THS, 2020). As the website states it is a project "to re-Indigenize or place keep" (Ibid.). With help from various people from

the Indigenous community, especially 2Spirit members, and the Ojibiikaan organization, Tremblay planted the Three Sisters and ceremonial plants close to the river and near where the Seneca village of Taiaiaiko'n was once located. Tremblay in talking about the garden not only mentions the significance of growing practices, but also of the choice for seeds:

> The Seed Keeper who gifted me these enchanting opalescent-orange kernels at the Tyendinaga seed exchange has been preserving this relative at Kanawake. When I shared that I carried a vision of the Sisters growing on the Humber River again, he relayed, "that's where she comes from." He was deeply moved that we would be bringing her back home. (Tremblay in Muskrat Magazine 2019.)

The return of the Three Sisters to the river thus not only refers to Indigenous gardening practices and introduces a place where these skills can be shared as well as the food, but also to the specific history of this place. A history which has mostly been overlooked, among other reasons through the naming of the Etienne Brulé Park (a European settler who first travelled through these parts) (THS, 2020). In these stories, the Niwa'ah Onega'gaih'ih, Kobechenonk or so-called Humber river plays a significant role for the livelihoods of many Indigenous peoples living, travelling, and trading along the river valley (Johnson, 2013). Names given to the places, and some that have stuck, refer to the flowing water and the mobility of this place for example in the Mississaugas name for the river Kobechenonk (or Cobechenonk) which means 'leave the canoes and go back' or 'portage' (Johnson, 2013). The paths and trails, the rivers and the corn and forests growing on the riverbanks made way for various villages and camps with Taiaiaiko'n[1], or 'the knife that cuts through the river', as example of a large village with around 5000 residents

[1] Alternate spellings for Taiaiako'n are Taiaiagon, Teiaiagon and Teyeyayogon.

that overlooked the river. Likely destroyed by the French in 1687 or 1688, Taiaiaiko'n was erased. The interest in the fur trade and the tensions between the British and French further compromised a return of Indigenous residents to this part of the area especially as the most recent Mississaugas were displaced more and more from Toronto (Johnson, 2013). Although very little reminds one of the village in what is now a wealthy neighborhood, Baby Point, THS has brought the attention back to this place through its Missing Plaque project and through the aforementioned Three Sisters Garden.

In the following the vision that Tremblay describes will be considered as an imaginary entangled with other perspectives on (community) gardening as a practice. It not only considers the social, cultural or political impact, but also the ecological and more-than-human connections. It also takes into account how these topics are caught up in bigger questions revolving around the visibility of Indigenous people in the city and an urban context where they are often made invisible (Howard-Wagner, 2021). This process of making visible Indigenous displacement, alienation, successes and resurgence is not just like other struggles for the right to the city, but as Deirdre Howard-Wagner discusses "is a complex social and cultural process that necessitates unsettling the possessive investment in whiteness in order to restore, regenerate, and repatriate Indigenous life and nationhood in the city" (2020, p. 10). Although the context discussed might reiterate reductive images of an Indigenous experience as rural, in nature, and thus not as urban or current, the following also emphasizes the situatedness of the garden in the city. It takes into account how an urban Aboriginal experience is distinctive (Andersen, 2013). Insight in how various Indigenous perspectives exist is necessary to regard and acknowledge Indigenous identity complex and dense in itself (Ibid.). At the same time, it should also reflect on the dynamics between green spaces in the built environment of the city and how the Three Sisters

along the river flow with and against the stream of social, political and cultural visions of the city.

The Three Sisters

A garden consisting of the three different vegetables growing together is referred to as the Three Sisters in various Indigenous epistemologies. With corn, beans or squash specific to different lands and thus different communities, the practice of tending to the sisters is a practice found across Turtle Island and further South. Robin Wall Kimmerer writes about the sisters in *Braiding Sweetgrass* in which she presents plants as teachers (2013). She expands on how "plants tell their stories not by what they say, but by what they do", and how one can learn by paying attention to the dances and movements of the corn, squash and beans (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 129). Their growing together is not incidental, but shows an intricate relationship found in the way that squash leaves provide ground cover, corn makes a stable stalk for beans to grow up on and beans fix nitrogen into the soil as nutrition for its sisters. This is only a simplified explanation of how the three, like sisters, take on different roles and thrive when the others do too. Once harvested the sisters also go incredibly well together in recipes and dishes that yield a well-rounded nutritious meal (Kimmerer, 2013). In these (intra)relations that are formed Kimmerer sees "layers and layers of reciprocity in this garden: between the bean and the bacterium, the bean and the corn, the corn and the squash, and, ultimately, with the people" (p. 134). The more-than-human relatings sensed here and the constitution of a thriving and fertile space for all components emphasize not just the human element. However, the role of human action, collaboration or opposition is still crucial to consider.

These intra-actions are perhaps further illustrated in looking at gardens as hybrid as Emma Power (2005) does. She contends that the embodied engagement of gardening involves

"processes of collaboration, negotiation, challenge and competition" (Power, 2005, p. 39). As a practice that entails reflexivity, dynamism it is presented as something not necessarily human or plant centered, thus going against engrained ideas of gardening being a solely human activity to which nature is a passive participant (Power, 2005). Power in her work describes suburban gardens in northern Sydney, but these ideas and thoughts around gardening also come back in the discussion of Indigenous practices as illustrated by Kimmerer and by the Three Sisters.

In the Three Sisters garden and in (traditional) Indigenous gardening practices in general, the separation of human and its natural surrounding or other beings is not as stark as it would be in Western thought (Kimmerer, 2013; Viriaere & Miller, 2018). Kimmerer to that regard offers the idea that perhaps a human actor can be considered a fourth sister as she considers humans "part of the reciprocity" and posits that the sisters or the other beings "can't meet their responsibilities unless we meet ours" (2013: p. 140). These entanglement of reciprocity, care and responsibility are also what Tremblay and Ojibiikaan bring up. The project is not undertaken by one person but is a process to which many hands have contributed work and many heads have shared knowledge. Tremblay as Earth Worker receives seeds from a Seed Keeper during a seed exchange and gets help from other community members not only to sow those first seeds but to tend to the garden and the plants too with ceremony, maintenance and care. Moreover, other beings are mentioned as having contributed to the collaboration that has happened on the land for years (THPS, 2020). It thus also brought multiple species together as they reintroduced the Three Sisters to the place where they had thrived before and where the cultural work of Indigenous peoples had been undertaken for many years (THPS, 2020).

However, the relations that shaped the project and the connections that needed to be made were not only in their own interactions with the garden that they tended to carefully but in the

connections or lack thereof with other people too. Negotiation with the city, its police, park officials, as well as the "settler folx who walked, cycled, jogged and ambled by" was necessary to first get the project started (THPS, 2020). Although the garden resultingly had a place to grow and flourished for the first time in years, Re-Sistering also experienced a significant blow when the sisters were torn out from the soil in the summer of 2019 (Muskrat, 2019). City workers took out the garden unannounced resulting in a painful and violent experience of seeing both the Three Sisters garden and another garden with ceremonial plants like tobacco and sage destroyed carelessly as Tremblay describes (THPS, 2020). After a multi-day ceremony to grieve the loss and devastation, seeds saved or kept from the former garden were replanted by some of the same community members and new support. Carefully tended to, the plants were once again given space and time to grow and to form their own entanglements with the soil, the weevils, the river, each other and the people attuned to their needs. Thus, beyond negotiating with the corn, squash and beans and with the river, the project needed to navigate its relations with other humans too.

Food sovereignty and security

The development of the garden, its setbacks and its negotiation and collaboration between various beings or actors reflects not just issues on a local scale, but more general problems around Indigenous sovereignty that the Re-Sistering project addresses. The reconnecting of the apolitical leisure space of the Humber River Valley with the history of Taiaiako'n and Three Sisters gardening, the continued presence and visibility, contribute to the assertion of Indigenous land sovereignty and self-determination. The practice of gardening and growing vegetables also speaks to the more specific issue of food sovereignty. Indigenous food sovereignty is, as described by Cidro and Martens (2015), the amount of control one has over the "how, what, and

when food is eaten" which poses specific complications for urban Indigenous communities who have reduced access not only to healthy and affordable food but also cultural or traditional food. The latter can be considered another layer to the issue of food security (Cidro & Martens, 2015 in reference to Power, 2008). The key findings from research on the matter entail both the problems at hand as well as the potential of Indigenous food sovereignty: food is a way to reclaim identity, it creates and reminisces important memories, it creates possibilities to practice culture in the city and it enables people from Indigenous communities to build relationships with each other and with people outside of the cities (Cidro & Martens, 2015, p. 7). These elements show that it is complicated to see the growing of the Three Sisters as isolated or separate from the urban Aboriginal experience or from deeper connections with the history and the land. In this context it also makes sense to reflect on the idea that the gardening practice itself might be considered intangible cultural heritage or living Indigenous heritage as Hinetaakoha Viriaere and Caroline Miller (2018) argue for Māori food gardens in Aetearoa or New Zealand. These considerations combine both the embodied practice of gardening and the benefit one might get from working on and with the land, as well as the intangible or invisible value and relations that emerge from these practices engrained in Indigenous knowledge and storytelling (Viriaere & Miller, 2018).

As much as the heritage value thus goes out to the knowledge and practice another significant part has to be the preservation of native species and the sharing of heritage seeds as Tremblay already pointed out through her interaction with the Seed Saver, but also with the luck of having saved several seeds that could be replanted after the garden had been taken down (THPS, 2020). Beyond being able to cook and eat food specific to one's culture the importance also comes from a biodiversity perspective. Growing vegetables, herbs or flowers familiar to

immigrant communities can already be empowering in connecting people with each other and with place (Baker, 2007). Although this might normally be important to connect diversity in the city with diversity in gardens, especially when taking into account cultural food insecurity, it takes on other meanings in the context of growing species native to the land and a need for rethinking our sensibilities with regards to the loss of biodiversity (Yusoff, 2013). The question of biodiversity also brings to the fore the necessity of preserving a landscape or ecology and the care for place that urban gardening in general already get attributed, but even more so through these careful and considerate processes (Baker, 2007).

Sensory Re-Sisters/Re-Sist(er)ing

The shifting focus from the sustaining of Indigenous communities and their practices to the land itself (and with an emphasis on how these are intricately linked) opens up the conversation to the agency of place too. The Re-Sistering Three Sisters garden is not only concerned with the resulting harvest and the food it will provide, but with the entire process of setting up, working on and learning skills, as much as it cares for the place and regards it not as a blank canvas but as holding its own significance, its own (hi)stories and perhaps its own sense(s) of place(s). With this decentralizing of the human and the simultaneous acknowledgement that Indigenous people have already been decentralized from this concept in humanist perspectives (Sundberg, 2014), a next step could be made in thoughts on sense of place by asking if more-than-human beings have or engage with this concept. It allows for questions to be asked such as: Do the Three Sisters engage with sense(s) of place(s)? How do they make attachments or get displaced? To some extent these questions have already been answered, but to go deeper sensing needs to be rethought to not get stuck in human-centered sensory experiences either.

Jennifer Gabrys (2019) to that end is useful through her discussion of sensing and sensing practices as also developed along with Helen Pritchard (2018). Besides it being "an analytical device for thinking through how experience and relations are reworked across entities, environments, and technologies" it also presents sensing by other means which, as she quotes Cymene Howe, "entails sensing through others' means and beyond the human sensorium" (Gabrys, 2019, p. 724; Howe (2019) as quoted in Gabrys, 2019, p. 723). Even more importantly, these changed dynamics and processes can help reconfigure the manners in which to be responsive and responsible in (in)sensible or changing worlds (Gabrys, 2019; Yusoff, 2013). These openings into responsibility further fold Three Sister gardening or farming practices into the reciprocity described by Kimmerer or, in Tremblay's case, the "caring so much" (THPS, 2020).

It is then through the help of Joce Two-Crows Tremblay, Ojibiikaan, 2-Spirit community member, children and mothers, that the Three Sisters could grow again after the first garden was destroyed. As such the collaboration between Indigenous community members and accomplices, the vegetables and critters growing in the soil and the land surrounding it, continue to re-Indigenize the land and as such resist the project of a neoliberal and (post)colonial city. That these urban imaginaries in between beans, corn and squash might unsettle visions of Toronto's cityscape reiterates the need for these changes. The Three Sisters cannot grow everywhere in the city, but the multiple places where these embodied, intimate and sensing practices emerge are seeds of potential.

As the conversation meanders from the historical significance of the location of the Re-Sistering project to the issues revolving around Indigenous (food) sovereignty, it lays bare the many connections that already exist between the land, the people and other beings as well as the

relations that have been severed or are hard to attune to. The Sisters might require people to attune to their sensory registers as they resist the continuation of a city that is settled in its oppression and erasure of an Aboriginal urban experience. Tending to these gardens is then not only about watering the plants, but also about taking part in the reciprocity of these intra-relations and to not wander by passively.

To a certain extent it reflects the observation from Wangui Kimari and Jessica Parish that the garden "interrupts the singular and ahistorical landscape" (2020, p. 652). They however stand not only in interruption of the landscape, but also in connection with as the three distinct plants rely on and work with the soil, air and, of course, water that is available to them. The people who have planted these seeds, and the plants that grow, are considerate in their intra-actions with the Humber River and its valley and while negotiation with the city, police or settler by passers is still needed now and, in the future, the image of a city where the Three Sisters can grow thrives next to the Niwa'ah Onega'gaih'ih, Kobechenonk or Humber river. Rather than just being an interruption, the garden provides a (palimpsestic) glimpse of what this part of Toronto has been in the past, its present potential and what it might hold for the future.

At the time of writing this thesis, the end of winter 2021, the soil awaits the summer to come, not only as the weather is still too cold for new Sisters to grow (figure 4). The park and other parts on the riverbank are cur under construction for a replacement of part of the sewage network. The paths are muddy, heavy machinery takes up space and bright orange plastic fences surround the garden plot. It stands in stark contrast with what summer looks like, when greenery flourishes and people take a stroll with their dogs or kids play around, but even during a regular grey and bare winter the construction site changes the area significantly. Here's hoping that the Sisters will grow freely in the coming summer again. If not, there are several other gardens

around the city where other Sisters or their kin can grow. Re-Sistering is not the only garden in Tkaronto where the Indigenous practices have re-rooted: Ojibiikaan grows medicinal plants in Mia's Medicine Garden in Christie Pitts, Isaac Crosby has reintroduced the Sisters among the other gardens at Evergreen Brickworks along the Don, Black Creek Community Farm has made space for the Sweetgrass Roots Collective (among whom also Joce Tremblay) to grow medicinal plants, the Wendat garden group has a Medicine Wheel Garden on their lands in Eglinton Park, Maskikii;aki'ing (Medicine Earth) is Na-Me-Res' Medicine Wheel Garden to help support Aboriginal men in Toronto at Hillcrest Park, and those are only a few of the places where gardening is used to reconnect people with the lands and to re-Indigenize or decolonize these spaces.[2]

The sisters growing together in support of each other and flourishing as a whole provide an interesting lesson, not just for how the city could transform itself, but also specifically related to the practice of research and of what could be multi-epistemic worlds. Kimmerer (2013) provides her reader with a lesson that could be learned from the Three Sisters. She muses that the sisters in their working together and supporting of each other might be a metaphor for what could be the relation between Indigenous knowledge and Western science in which the "monoculture of science will be replaced with a polyculture of complementary knowledges" (p. 137). She ends with the trust in these wise teachers who "in ripe ears and swelling fruit, counsel us that all gifts are multiplied in relationships" and that "this is how the world keeps going" (Kimmerer, 2013, p. 140).

[2] For a more comprehensive list of Indigenous gardens in Toronto: http://torontourbangrowers.org/indigenous-gardens-and-organizations

Figure 4. Etienne Brulé Park under construction with fenced in on the right the remains of last year's gardens.

Source: author.

8. Concluding Thoughts - Situating Imaginaries in Place

The statement from Dionne Brand about her appointment as poet laureate for Toronto in 2009 emphasized how the city in all its multiplicity and with its matters related to the heart, is complex. Further exploring it now, it has an underlying critical note for that complicated place and the complicated relationships it brings with it. That should be no surprise when reflecting on *thirsty* which in poems details the both the moments of beauty and of terror in the city (a man gets shot by police), and of a diasporic experience, without any of the concreteness it so often encounters. It does not settle in line with the narratives of multiplicity promoted by the city, of Toronto as a multicultural fragrant and entertaining diversity, but goes into depth and explores a density, not just in *thirsty* but in her other work too. Perhaps one of the takeaways from this research is the entanglements with the good and the bad parts of a place, while retaining the possibility to be critical. Sense(s) of place(s) should be able to engage with all of these components and not just the positive moments of belonging and attachment, to hopefully tend to more complex understandings and furthermore in the urban imaginations.

Some of the threads that weave these places together besides their locations in Tkaronto or Toronto, bring more insight into the workings of sense of place within urban imaginaries and perhaps also beyond. The contexts discussed here certainly show a diversity in experiences of the city and in ways of understanding or sensing it. It however also shows that this diversity brings about tensions, as different senses of places oppose one another and as some are obscured or erased in favor of other senses of place. In some cases that not only creates issues for what will be built in the future but is reductive in its considerations of what already exists in place, let alone what place in itself contributes or what agency it has. The threads identified in the analysis will be brought together here to form a last entangling of the matters of concern and care of this

thesis.

Roots

The grounding or situating of urban imaginaries in place is further considered when looking at the rootedness of some of the expressions of sense of place in the contexts of Eglinton Avenue West, Quayside and the Humber river. There is significance in discussing our roots as entwined with the soil of the cities we live in and the plants or other more-than-human beings who exist right beside us. Such rootedness can be taken quite literally in the case of the Re-Sistering project on the banks of the Niwa'ah Onega'gaih'ih, Kobechenonk or Humber river where the plants connect with the soil to get access to water and nutrients and settle in their place. The specific relation between the plants moreover show collaboration and reciprocity as they help one another to thrive together. Their root networks are not wholly separate but do form relations with each other and the soil.

The roots of the communities in Little Jamaica extend beyond Toronto and Canada when taking into account the diasporic geographies and their affective, economic or cultural connections with places beyond a bounded concept of place. Here and there, networks are formed between people and form social infrastructures to build "each other up" (CP Planning, 2021). Quayside might seem a separate entity, but even a smart city narrative that aims to connect people and technology builds new networks and infrastructures. Such technological infrastructures have the potential to be entanglements of inter-species relatings, but not in seamless visions that aim to hide the working, breakdowns and maintenance needed to keep these places going (Houston et al., 2019). Perhaps a going back to the connection between Toronto and the lake is another way of rooting the Quayside site in place.

Displacement

To that regard, sense of place has the potential of situating these imaginaries in place. Where something like the smart city narrative is innovative and forward looking, it might be questioned to what extent it attunes to the past and present of a place, materially or culturally, especially if the approach of building a city 'from the internet up' is taken to suggest that this place is a *tabula rasa* (Doctoroff, 2016). Turning to the future, does not need to negate what is already present, even if this space is characterized as 'abandoned', 'underutilized' or in need for revitalization. Such disregard can moreover be part of bigger issues and patterns as is the case for a neighborhood like Little Jamaica. The neglect of the City to consider the impact of the LRT construction on Eglinton Avenue West and its lack of acknowledgement of the cultural and historical significance of the area to Black and Caribbean communities is an indication of the repeated erasure of Black spaces and thus of their right to form sense of place, to be in place and to form attachments (Gordon, 2018). These dynamics of belonging and attachment but also of racism and the displacement of minority communities are also present in the case of the Re-Sistering project. The Indigenous gardening or farming practices used there reinforce visibility of Indigenous peoples in urban settings, claim rights to the land and at the same time necessitate a reconfiguration of the ways in which a 'Western' epistemology relates to the land, plants, other people and more-than-human beings.

The discussion of networks and infrastructures is in these cases not limited to connection. With Eglinton's LRT construction disrupting the business of (Black-owned) record stores, barber shops and restaurants, its aim to connect the neighborhood with the rest of the city is working more towards displacing the people who live there. As such it extends movement of people on public transport into the forced relocating of residents and business owners in Little Jamaica

through gentrification or other factors as rents rise. It is thus another side of the conversation that needs to be had when talking about geographies and places. It is a reminder of Massey's description of the specificity of place based not only on the stories and articulations that are actualized and intersect, but also of the "non-meetings-up, the disconnections, and the relations not established, the exclusions" (2005, p. 130). In relation to the particularities of sense of place it should thus not only be about the sense of attachment and belonging, but needs to include the experience of displacement and disconnection too. It should moreover acknowledge that to be (kept) in place or to be placeless have been imposed on racialized people and that these processes are tied up in geographies and histories of colonialism (McKittrick, 2011). Moreover, various Indigenous epistemologies share connection with place not known by white settlers, and thus experience the loss or lack of (sense of) place as especially significant and violent (Windsor & McVey, 2005). (Re)claiming Black or Indigenous spaces and geographies in Toronto are thus powerful actions to imagine the city differently.

Last, displacement connects with eviction too, and with the need or right to affordable housing for all residents in Toronto. Sense of place is tightly connected to the idea of 'home' and 'belonging', as such it is important to note that that concept in itself is complex and being complicated by policies and law enforcement in this city. The way that a place like Tent City can easily be forgotten in comparison to an uncompleted project from a huge corporation, is another dynamic to take into account if the many layers of Toronto are discussed.

Imagining *otherwise*

Although recognizing the critical side to theories and narratives around sense of place is important, combining these sensibilities opens up the debate for potential beyond description and

critique too. The focus on urban imaginaries and how sense of place interacts with it, show processes of envisioning, imagining, worlding and planning what might have been unimaginable or even unsensible. That allows for conversations to take place about "not only detecting what is there, what is given in the thing we are studying, but also think about what is not included in it and about what this thing could become – for instance if other participants were gathered by/in it" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2011, p. 96 as quoted in Metzger, 2014b, p. 1008-1009).

Thoughts on the potentialities and possibilities of things, refocuses on the idea that the 'things' discussed change. Such transitoriness is already often ascribed to the urban, but that does not mean that changes that happen should merely be accepted as an inevitable part of how cities continuously transform. CP Planning and Black Urbanism TO, Re-Sistering, Block Sidewalk and the many other residents who have voiced their concerns about changes happening in space near and dear to them, show the critical reflection often needed. It also expresses a need to include people in envisioning, imagining and actually making decisions on what happens in the cities they inhabit. Sense of place might help understand what their visions are and could include more affective relations into the debate too, that especially in urban planning very often focuses on neoliberal tendencies to prioritize marketability, profit, or competitiveness and is subjected to unjust systems of power and spatial imaginaries predicated on whiteness (Metzger, 2014a; Livia Brand, 2018). These globally pervasive practices of neoliberal urban planning can be countered with local movements and understandings of place, but as Massey (1992) has already pointed out it should turn one's gaze and ability to be touched inwards, to make it as much about looking inside as it is about looking and relating outwards. That cannot be but a messy and complex process. It is thus similarly a rethinking of sense of place not as a static object to be analyzed, but as something transient, as (creative) working that sees, feels, touches, a place and perhaps in its

most radical forms imagines it *otherwise* in its 'excessive heterogeneity' (Povinelli, 2011, p. 10).

I refer to workings specifically, because the opening up towards sense(s) of place(s) and the engagement with sensing practices, reiterates the concept not as a static object, or as something to be imposed on space. It is dynamic too and should not be perceived as just an affective or semiotic layer on top of the material ones. Rather, its processes entwine material imaginations with emotional, affective, meaningful and careful urban imaginaries. It makes sense of place part of the process of imagining, either as something to be strived for or as an element and practice that further informs it. This focus on it being as much a process as a static object is important to include sensing practices into the ways that place and sense of place can be engaged with. The growing of the Three Sisters specifically demonstrates an embodied practice that requires one to attune differently to their surroundings and to take on a role in a network of reciprocity (Kimmerer, 2013). The use of technological sensors could require a similar need for people to take responsible roles in maintaining the infrastructures around them. These bodily and affective co-composing undertaking are heightened in these instances, but might inform our everyday practices as part of and moving through space as well.

Knowledge

To some extent these sensing practices thus align with the ways in which knowledge has been (re)thought of in the Indigenous perspectives presented here, as well as in the smart city narratives. Intelligence, smart-ness, knowledge and so on come back repeatedly throughout the literature review and the analysis. I would argue it after all not only reflects on the understanding of senses of places as they form in the cases, but also in the research practice. On the one hand then, the Re-Sistering garden requires a different attunement to the land and plants to regard them as teachers and to learn from them. This is a reconfiguration of what predominantly is

considered knowledge in an academic context. In the case of Quayside and the smart city, it encounters not grounded or situated knowledge, but rather the ubiquity of abstract data that flows between entities such as smart waste management systems. At the same time, the pressure for citizen participation and involvement of locals could rethink who are 'experts'. That certainly would connect with Eglinton Avenue West where (former) residents speak up about their experiences and the validity of their knowledge, such as in the case of Eglinton's heritage.

On the other hand, the learning that takes place throughout this work is also focused on the production and definition of knowledge in the academic context and in relation to the research. It is in these concluding thoughts a reflection on the ways in which the travelling of the concept of sense of place within the loose boundaries of this thesis, has been able to pick up other understandings along the way in the hopes of engaging with sense of place theories and epistemologies in more depth and across broader fields of experiences, perspectives and knowledges. The steps on 'locating the self', 'learning to learn' and 'walking with' return here to emphasize that this is a work in progress. A last thought on the matter might be to bring together notions of place and Sundberg's (2014) drawing on the Zapatistas movement, to emphasize that this walking with, or this travelling of concepts and theories, cannot be done if the land walked on is merely perceived as a surface to get from point A to point B. Its depth, profile, relief, or (geological) layers should be taken into account. Instead, "you have to catch up with what's been happening, with how this place too has been moving" (Massey, 2000, p. 87).

Slowing Things Down

While the conversation has mostly revolved around space and place on the one hand and the affective or sensory registers on the other, the component of time has not been absent. Both connected to the movements already described (in the form of migration, transportation and

bodily interactions with space for example through gardening) and as a dimension in itself, time has been an important ingredient in this research. For André Corboz (1983) perceiving the land as something that becomes through a process of "lengthy and very slow stratification" returns the "long term dimension" of the land and reintroduces a depth forgotten by what probably would be 'Western' thought (p. 32). Considering sense of place or other expressions of belonging, attachment and community or individual identities have the potential to reintroduce depth, but even these concepts in themselves might need reconsideration. Sense of place as engaged with in urban planning often restricts itself by considering people and place as separate entities where other beings like animals or plants mostly take up space in the latter as 'nature'.

The analysis here has shown how these depths and long and slow processes have not been acknowledged by all actors involved in envisioning and (re)building the Toronto urban landscape. To an extent this thesis reflects on what Michele Lobo (2019) in reference to Elizabeth Povinelli sees as a need to disrupt the cases of identity politics and the tense of time "that places the indigene in the past, the migrant in the future but places the authoritative white settler capable of 'mining' or mediating traditional knowledge in the thick present" (p. 400). The complexity of untangling and (re)braiding urban worlds might need a slowing down of things to allow for new registers of sense to emerge that can "contribute to responsible co-becomings" (Lobo, 2019, p. 396).

These new registers of sense can extend beyond human-centered sensing practices, but perhaps one to focus on would be touch "which deepens awareness of the embodied character of perception, affect, and thinking" (Puig de la Bellacasa, 2017, p.). This awareness is furthermore connected through Dona Haraway's description that "touch, regard, looking back, becoming with – all these make us responsible in unpredictable ways for which worlds take shape" (2008, p.

36). Responsibility is taken up by local residents and organizations, from Black Urbanism TO to Block Sidewalk, to oppose visions of what Toronto should look like from actors in power. The actions, protests, reports, consultation and so on are however not just exemplary of what would be citizen participation, but also of a deeper sense of responsibility, or response-ability. The people involved hold regard for the communities or places that already exist in the locations where opposing visions might threaten to take over. These movements show various components of what it would mean to care for place. In its simplest form, their paying attention to these places and to hold them in regard, enables different relations of tending and attuning to their realities, experiences and affective registers. This sensing of place perhaps differs from the intention to make sense of place as it further involves people approaching place relationally as it asks to reconsider how to sense or attune to that place.

For all three cases there is a certain amount of waiting involved. Little Jamaica awaits the completion of the LRT construction and the opening up of its businesses, the Three Sisters as part of the Re-Sistering project will have to wait until warmer weather to flourish again and Quayside waits in anticipation of new competition results while development around it already alters the waterfront. This waiting is however not necessarily passive, as it also provides opportunities to take the time to pay attention to these spaces, to regard them carefully and form new response-abilities. Attuning to these spaces will not only lay bare its most obvious layers, but might provide glimpses into what lies underneath and more importantly of the workings that shape the layers, that hold them together and bring them into pluriversal worlds. Having that time and space might also be a good starting point where "attention becomes intention, which coalesces itself to action" (Kimmerer, 2014, p. 20).

To be continued

None of the three contexts that have been discussed in this thesis are in the same situation they were in when I first heard about or was interested in including them in my thesis. Rather, the past few months have changed their situations quite drastically and in the timeline of writing this thesis I have had to adjust some sections significantly to include the latest updates. Some of these changes were genuinely surprising such as finding out that after not having been on my regular bike rides along the Humber River Valley for the winter months that parts were turned into a muddy construction site rather than a place to escape my own home and the city. As I was researching and writing about Little Jamaica various new developments occurred through Black Urbanism TO and CP Planning's hard work to get support economically and culturally for the neighborhood. Especially when the Black Futures on Eglinton Report was published in January and the following media attention and the motion from councilor Josh Matlow that was accepted with a resulting consultation session set up by City Hall at the start of March 2021. Similarly, the day I finished writing the chapter on Quayside new plans from Waterfront Toronto were shared with the public. Keeping up with these (surprising) twists, it at times felt very much like I was not writing about but writing with these contexts and had to work to keep up with them. That also means that this conclusion can hardly be seen as a 'cases closed'. I hope to thus conclude with remarks on ways to further open up the conversation for others or for myself.

I would have liked to have entangled myself more into the situations, but with limited ability to go outside and be in the city, that often left me to find alternative ways of providing support, engaging with and learning about the sites that are central to this thesis. It has been especially eye-opening to see how quickly the virtual space became a place where such relations of reciprocity and response-ability could be formed. That online environment has not taken up as much space in this thesis as it perhaps could have. The city as a dynamic palimpsest not only

exists in place and in our imaginations but also in virtual space and the potential for editing or creating layers of the palimpsest are great. Thinking with and thinking through the virtual in how sense of place forms would be an interesting path to take.

To root for the communities featured in this research and help them grow or thrive, the question of this thesis might have to take on not only the questions already asked here, but also what has only been hinted at through the brief discussions of what urban planning could do or what infrastructures need to be built. Perhaps a further step in the research would be to consider how to form frameworks or spaces that help provide fertile soil for these dynamic rooted networks (or perhaps rhizomes) to grow. That could be through an engagement with urban planning practices, policy development or the creation of social infrastructures.

Last, I would like to mention that writing this thesis has been a learning process to entangle myself further in multi-epistemic literacy and in pluriversal worlds. The (un)learning of certain practices is work that I take responsibility for and want to continue, because even with the intentions to walk with other epistemologies, I also acknowledge that there is more work to be done here.

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