

Trans Narratives Through Oral History and Design

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Abstract

The goal of this project is to gain a trans feminist oral history (Hill 2007) perspective on the lived experiences of transgender (more specifically gender non-conforming) individuals and the emotions they feel. I explore how to visualize and materialize individual experiences that “also connect to collective experiences, one story becoming the story of many” (Hill 2007, p4). The presentation of transgender experiences is explored through book design. My question, therefore, is, how can book design highlight commonalities within the broader transgender community and link disparate individuals through shared experience? This topic has been addressed by interviewing three gender non-conforming individuals using a trans feminist oral history methodology (Hill 2007). This project aims to meld art and design in order to express the collective experiences that are shared throughout the trans community.

Key Words: Community, transgender, shared experience, trans kinship, transgender gaze, oral history, feminism

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Introduction

This thesis was born out of the desire to represent trans kinship and highlight commonalities amongst the transgender (TG) community when discussing lived experience. The transgender community makes up 0.33% of the population in Canada according to the 2021 Canadian census (Statistics Canada 2022, para. 10), and just under 1 in every 100 people ages 20-24 identify as trans or non-binary (0.85%) (Statistics Canada 2022, para. 14). Despite the very small percentage of individuals in Canada who identify as transgender, this population is still the target of major attacks, “more likely to have experienced violence since age 15, and also more likely to experience inappropriate behaviours in public, online and at work than cisgender Canadians” (Statistics Canada 2020, para. 7). Nonetheless, those in the trans community have found kinship in the shared experiences they endure, both positive and negative, allowing for the community to blossom and demonstrate strength in numbers.

This thesis project explores the lived experiences of transgender individuals in Canada and represents these experiences through book design, with the goal of highlighting commonalities in a way that brings the transgender community together. This topic is not only deeply personal, it also provides an opportunity to demonstrate the transgender gaze by designing this project for trans people instead of designing for cisgendered people as a way to help them understand. In a piece written by Hazel Lu for Columbia University’s undergraduate journal, *The Gadfly*, Lu (2023) argues that the transgender gaze is “the view of the world produced when people engage willfully in the eccentric relationships and networks built by transness and queerness. In this sense, the ability to see the world as a realm of possibilities for the creation of queer-being-in-the-world is radically different from the capabilities of cissexist and heterosexist institutions.” (para. 21). My project is not designed to promote the humanization of transgender people as a way to evoke empathy from cisgender people. Instead, this project is about the trans experience between mind, body, and perspective. Lu (2023) identifies trans kinship as a necessary component to the transgender gaze (para. 22), and throughout this thesis, I will cite contributions that support this statement.

Design and activism have long been linked to one another. Kenneth FitzGerald, a writer, artist, educator, and curator (FitzGerald 2010), states, “Here is the true ‘mother’ of graphic design, residing out in the open, readily identifiable. Graphic design as we know it was initiated and nurtured as activism: progressive, political speech.” (FitzGerald 2023, para. 16). Design as a means to convey a message through type, form, and image has been used by political activists for decades, especially amongst groups of marginalized and historically underrepresented groups. There has been work done within the design discipline to encourage a “designing with” rather than a “designing for” (Guffey 2023). Taking

this framework, primarily emerging from disability studies and design, I see it as valuable to a number of different marginalized communities, including the trans community. As an openly transgender and non-binary designer myself, I have witnessed first hand how trans kinship provides comfort in shared experiences. The narratives that are highlighted throughout the three books presented in this thesis can facilitate trans kinship through narrative and materiality. The book form is also an excellent representation of the body, with the cover acting as the metaphorical exterior shell, what a person chooses to present to the world, and the interior or “guts” of the book as a person’s experiences, thoughts, and feelings that makes them who they are. This is a concept that I will be exploring throughout this thesis.

The questions that drive this project include:

Are there individual experiences common within the trans community collective?;

How can personal narratives translate into book narratives?;

Which elements of the book form lend themselves to exploration when representing lived experience?

These questions were taken into consideration at every step of this project, grounding the work, though were often secondary to my main research question: How can book design highlight commonalities within the broader transgender community and link disparate individuals through shared experience? By opening up conversations about transgender lived experiences, community bonding, and trans kinship, my goal is to answer this question by exploring these narratives through the book form.

Methodologies

Oral History as a Method

I selected oral history as my preferred method due to its historical and contemporary use within the trans community as a way of retelling “significant historical events, capturing first-hand accounts and memories of these experiences, documenting the lives of significant individuals, or recording the lives of those who might otherwise not be included in standard histories” (Hill 2007, p2). Utilizing the trans feminist oral history methodology¹ that Hill highlights throughout his research, I interviewed trans individuals about their everyday experiences, or “the ‘non-elite’, the all too ephemeral experience of a community often erased by most histories, providing an alternative perspective on their experiences.” (Hill 2007, p3). Due to the sensitive nature of the subject and the at-risk population, I knew I had to be

¹Hill (2007) and Varon (2023) both use the term ‘trans feminist’ but spell it differently. For the sake of this project and for clarity I have decided to utilize Hills spelling for the remainder of this project.

well-researched and responsive with my participants. Having a well designed project in order to attempt to gain participants' trust is vital to a successful outcome (Rachlin 2008, p17). However, the three participants I interviewed happened to be friends, people with whom trust had been previously established. Because of this relationship type, I needed to navigate this project in a way that ensured that trust remained intact and participants were aware that they could drop out, withdraw any information, or request anonymity at any time with no consequences and no effect on our relationships outside of this project. Although I offered anonymity to the participants, all three declined, so throughout the rest of this paper I will be referring to them by their first names. I also asked all participants to identify themselves and define their terms to ensure I as the researcher did not mislabel or misgender them, which is a huge point of contention and discomfort for trans people (Kolysh 2018, p110). The language used is deeply political (Namaste 2011, p2).

I have taken the appropriate measures of interviewing the “non-elite” and respecting the narratives that come from the interviews in order to prioritize trans voices and experiences. Just as Brown (2015) states; “For most if not all of them, oral history promises activists, scholars, and community members access to trans people’s own narratives, rather than the medical or juridical discourses that have shaped the production of much scholarship about trans lives.” (p666), this project prioritizes the voices and experiences of trans people, giving the community access to their own narratives.

By prioritizing the voice, this project highlights the everyday life for trans people (Namaste 2011, p3). The voice acts as the primary source for narratives to develop and shape the design element of this project. The narratives were not formed out of the idea of gender as a performance as “trans persons are more than literary devices illustrating the crisis of gender through discursive performatives” (Hill 2007, p1). Instead, the narratives were developed out of the everyday experiences of trans people who live in a society which does not believe in the performance of gender but rather the concrete roles gender provides within society. Oral history is therefore the best suited methodology as it “represents a method that connects individual memories and history, personal stories and public lives, mostly through repeated experiences and patterns in stories (Tonkin, 1992). The emphasis on an individual’s unique experience, then, does not distract from broader themes in the narratives of a collective as a whole” (Hill 2007, p4).

The Body

The body is arguably one of the most crucial and controversial aspects of transitioning; crucial for those transitioning and controversial to everyone else. The perception society has of gender, transness, and the gender binary is quite rigid. Therefore, when a trans individual either does not pass as their preferred

gender, or does not align their gender with male or female (non-binary, genderfluid, etc.), society typically express judgement and criticism to these individuals, “In fact, ‘passing,’ or the ability to present as one’s desired gender, may present as a chronic source of worry/concern for some TG individuals” (Tompkins et al. 2015, p35). Since the body, the perceptions of one’s body, and gender affirming treatments/behaviours are a major discussion point within both the trans community and society, it felt fitting to have the body be a major discussion point in this research. This is an opportunity to examine gender in society, gender through design, and how the body can be explored through the book form and narrative.

Another very important aspect of both queer oral history methods and the body is the sexualization of the trans body. As Kolysh writes, “the specter of sexual impropriety makes sexual feelings (and the intimacies that accompany them) a vital but virtually unspeakable aspect of queer oral history work” (2018, p11). The sexualization of trans people is a crucial aspect of this project: it exists in society and it impacts the daily lives of trans people. Meadows (2015) encourages researchers to engage with the topic and my goal was not to make this project purely about the sexualization of trans people but to give my interviewees the platform to discuss it. My strategy of asking open ended questions allowed the participants to interpret and then answer however they felt most comfortable. An example is the question “How did you feel about your body when you first recognized your trans identity?” which is followed by five sub questions, three of which touch on others’ perceptions of the participant’s body: “How do you think others perceive your body?; How do you think they feel about your body?; Has this been expressed to you?” These questions gave the participants the opportunity to talk about the sexualization of their bodies as trans individuals without explicitly demanding this type of personal information.

Gender affirmation can be divided into two different types: social and physical. Schaeff (2022) provides definitions for both:

Social affirmation (i.e., socially transitioning) involves taking actions that make visible an individual’s experiences rather than assigned gender such as using gender neutral or opposite gender names, pronouns, clothing and hairstyles, and binding or using prostheses ...Physical affirmation (i.e., physically transitioning) may include using one or more gender affirming treatments (GAT) including, for assigned-female-at-birth individuals, cross-sex hormones (i.e., testosterone), top (chest) and bottom (genital) surgery, and a hysterectomy to modify their primary and secondary sex characteristics. (p1).

The extent to which an individual chooses to seek both social and physical affirmations is completely dependent on the individual and how they prefer to present themselves/what makes them feel most comfortable (Schaeff 2022, p2). However, there is also a social pressure to conform that sets a gender expectation on both trans and cis individuals. This gender expectation often excludes trans people who are not hyper-feminine or hyper-masculine, as those who are non-binary can be subject to “gatekeeping” from service providers who do not see them as “trans enough” to be receiving gender affirming treatments (Schaeff 2022, p2). Access to services is one of the most difficult barriers for trans people (Namaste 2011, p4), and when those who provide these services are uneducated or misinformed about trans people, they may refuse access to services based on prejudice (Namaste 2011, p4).

Shared Experiences

One of the most important elements of this project is the idea of shared experiences; a number of events that take place individually in a person’s life that allows them to then relate to others who have also endured similar events. In the case of a trans person, shared experiences could include gender dysphoria or euphoria, coming out, changing one’s name, or transphobia. Transphobia can be described as an “emotional disgust towards individuals who do not conform to society’s gender expectations” (Tompkins et al. 2015, p35). Transphobia is very common in “other spheres of society, like at home, school, and the workplace” (Kolysh 2018, p6). These shared experiences allow for feelings of connectedness to form amongst the trans community. These emotions that trans people experience are not individual, they are what bring the community together, a connectedness through shared experiences and emotions. Hill’s (2007) assertion that “one of the stronger insights offered by feminist oral histories is that, as much as the stories represent individual experiences, they also connect to collective experiences, one story becoming the story of many” (p4) is the foundation of my research question.

Gender in Design

When gender is considered in design it typically falls under the stereotypical male-norm (Buchmüller 2012, p173). Considering the importance of gender and gender roles within western society, a trans feminist methodology is needed when conducting this project and designing the artifact. “The notion of gender itself can be seen as a patriarchal, social construction that operates as a tool for oppression. By using the term trans feminist, we reject a binary vision of gender in our definition of feminism” (Varon 2023, p170). Varon goes on to describe trans feminist values: agency, autonomy, empathy, embodiment,

intuition, pleasure, and decolonization (p170). The trans feminist design methodology recognizes the “importance of situated and embodied knowledge” (Varon 2023, p171), which is the driving factor of my design outcome. The trans feminist oral history methodology is also similar to Feminist Standpoint Theory which “focuses on experiences and everyday lives of marginalized groups, therefore it can particularly guide designers’ attention and decisions within the phase of design research to gather information and inspiration” (Buchmüller 2012, p178). By using the trans feminist oral history methodology (Hill 2007) and the feminist design framework (Buchmüller 2012) I am able to gather information from trans individuals about their everyday lives and lived experiences while also acknowledging and upholding trans feminist values. I am then able to utilize the feminist design framework (Buchmüller 2012) which highlights Feminist Standpoint Theory’s focus on “Experiences, everyday lives, life worlds of marginalized groups” (p176) with the aim of “Social change by new knowledges from marginalized perspectives, experiences” (p177) within the trans collective formed.

Framework

This project comprises two parts: the interviews and the book design. The interviews were conducted using trans feminist oral history methodology with the goal of understanding individual trans experiences and identifying any shared experiences between participants that may link them within the collective.

My goal was not to conduct the interviews in a way that provides me with specific outcomes, rather the project is built off of the interpretations these participants have of the open-ended questions I asked. The goal was to identify the specific positions taken by the unique participants within the small group I have assembled. This group is trans, and these specific positions may also speak to other trans individuals’ lived experiences, thus forming a collective.

The wording of these interview questions was vital to the integrity of the project. When Rachlin discusses the importance of conducting socially conscious research with trans individuals, she puts much emphasis on how the questions should be asked when interviewing trans folks, stating, “The way questions are phrased will cue participants as to whether the researcher is familiar with their experience and means to truly include them” (Rachlin 2008, p8). By asking open-ended questions that are worded in a way that allows the interviewee to respond in their own words with their own level of comfort, I provide them a platform to tell their own story without the pressure of an expected outcome or narrative from the interviewer (myself). The interview questions (Appendix A) I asked began by establishing context,

narrative, and comfortability when sharing life experiences. The questions then move into more abstract and personal recall about intimate details of their experiences with gender.

The selected participants are trans identifying individuals with which I have a pre-established relationship and these individuals all met the criteria I set: must identify as transgender (including all genders that fall under the umbrella of the term transgender); over the age of 18; must currently reside in Toronto, Vancouver, or Montreal; status of transition is not a factor; all races, ethnicities, and nationalities; all religions; and English speaking.

The three participants I selected all had the following in common: identify with the term transgender; gender non-conforming (non-binary and genderfluid); between the ages of 23 and 24; currently live in Toronto and Montreal; grew up in Canada; and are all involved in the arts. The interviews all occurred remotely via Zoom and were recorded using an audio recording software, no video was recorded.

Only once all three interviews had been conducted could I start the process of designing the books. The themes of these books were fully dependent on the answers provided by the participants during the interviews, with the final design outcomes speaking directly to the personal experiences shared by the participants. The goal of these books is to be able to represent commonalities within the broader transgender community and link disparate individuals through these shared experiences by using the book form as a method of representing each shared experience.

This project demonstrates research through making. This particular practice is necessary to fulfill the goal of representing collective experiences through the book form. Research through making allows for the connection of things like materials and ideas to make something new (Gauntlett 2011, p2).

As Gauntlett writes

Making is connecting because acts of creativity usually involve, at some point, a social dimension and connect us with other people; and making is connecting because through making things and sharing them in the world, we increase our engagement and connection with our social and physical environments.

By practicing research through making, I combine the research acquired throughout the interview process and the elements of the book form to shape the narrative of these shared experiences. Alongside research through making, I utilized feminist standpoint design which “is principally an open form of design that takes advantage of the natural diversity of human beings” (Buchmüller 2012, p179) and apply it to the

design work by acknowledging both the diversity and commonalities in these lived experiences.

Results

The design output is broken down into one book per participant. The participants all shared overlapping themes and commonalities, but each have their own unique stories and experiences to tell, art to share, and perspectives on the world. This section will analyze and detail the narrative being represented through the book form before then identifying the common themes throughout all three interviews and discussing how this relates to my secondary research.

My Body and Other Parties

My Body and Other Parties is based on the experiences Shaun (they/them) shared throughout their interview. Although not a traditional “book”, this zine is unbound and unrestricted. The narrative flows through the pages and unfolds into a double sided poster, revealing a glimpse into Shauns experiences that have helped shape them into who they are today.

The book title *My Body and Other Parties* is in reference to the Carmen Maria Machado novel *Her Body and Other Parties*. “Machado bends genre to shape startling narratives that map the realities of women’s lives and the violence visited upon their bodies” (Phenomenal Media, n.d.), *My body and Other Parties* is in direct correlation to the violence that is visited upon trans bodies.

The front of the poster (Figure 1) features a red/orange gradient that spans the entire front. This gradient is representative of the sudden and alarming flash that Shaun experienced when they were first recognizing their trans and non binary identity. The back of the poster (Figure 2) features the quote “I stand firmly in my identity and am not to be shaken by other people’s delusions” in a muted blue/grey gradient. Under that gradient are all of the life experiences that made Shaun who they are today.

The zine is divided into two sections. “My Body” (Figure 3) is about their own experiences navigating their trans identity and experiencing what they describe as “baby trans”. This section (Figure 4) is youthful, it features a baby picture, a picture of Shaun coming into their own skin, discussions of feeling “baby trans”, as well as a poem written by Shaun titled “Second Childhood”. This section (Figure 5) is meant to embody the young and new energy, maybe making you feel small or naive as you navigate through this transition for the first time. It may make your heart grow fond, or you may recall your own feelings of coming into your own when you were younger.



Figure 1 – My Body and Other Parties Orange Gradient

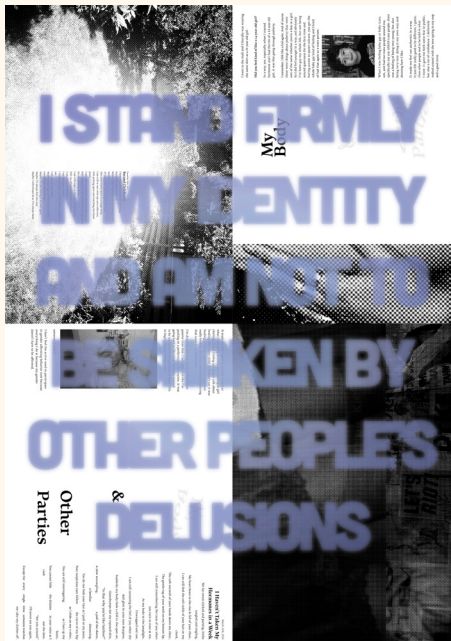


Figure 2 – My Body and Other Parties Back Poster

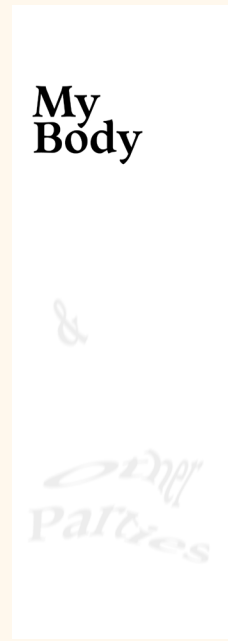


Figure 3 – My Body Cover

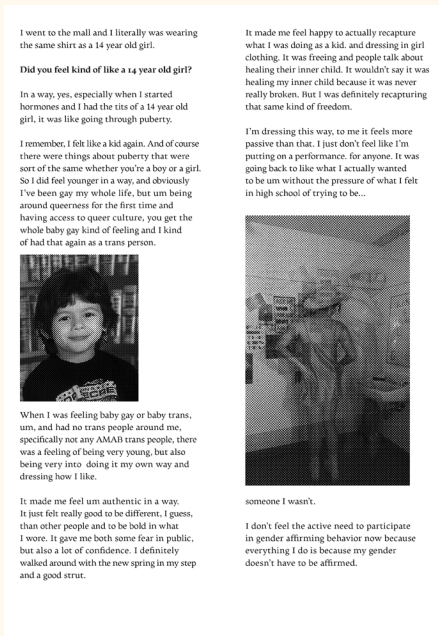


Figure 4 – My Body Section

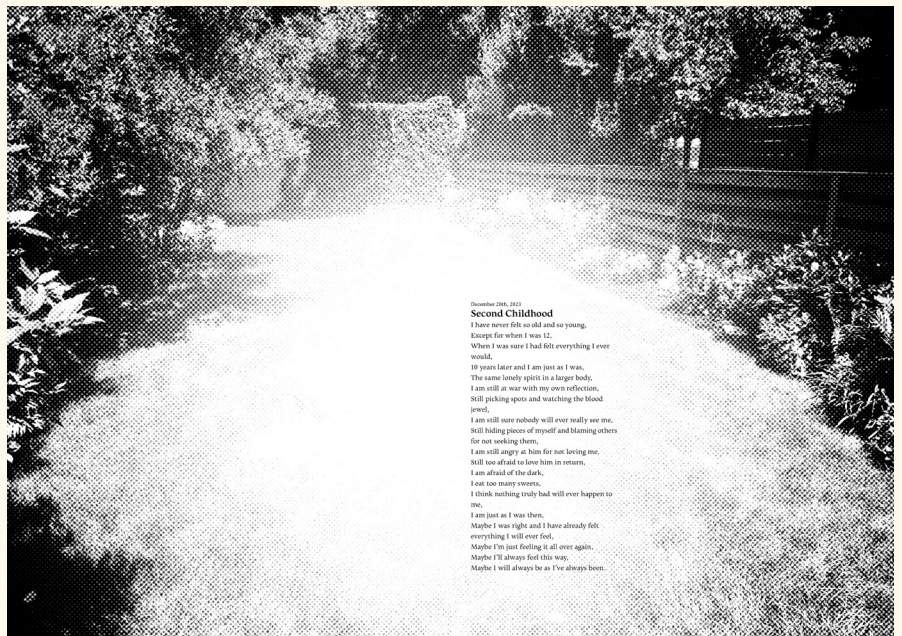


Figure 5 – My Body Poem

The second section of the zine, “and Other Parties” (Figure 6) is about others casting their own judgements, wants, and desires on to you and your body. This section is more indicative of the fetishization of trans people, it is meant to make you feel dissociative, uneasy, and observed. It features another poem (Figure 7) written by Shuan titled “I haven’t taken my hormones in a week”. The oversized black and white halftone image treatment adds to the slightly dazed and dissociative experience. With overlapping images and shifting transparencies, the visual overstimulation has an intense and jarring effect (Figure 8).

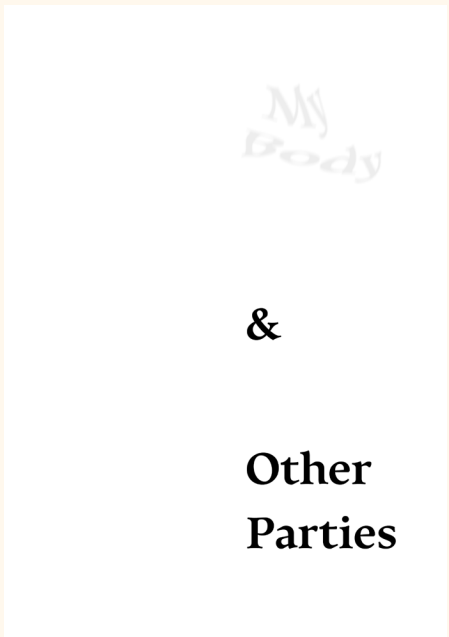


Figure 6 – & Other Parties Cover



Figure 7 – & Other Parties Poem

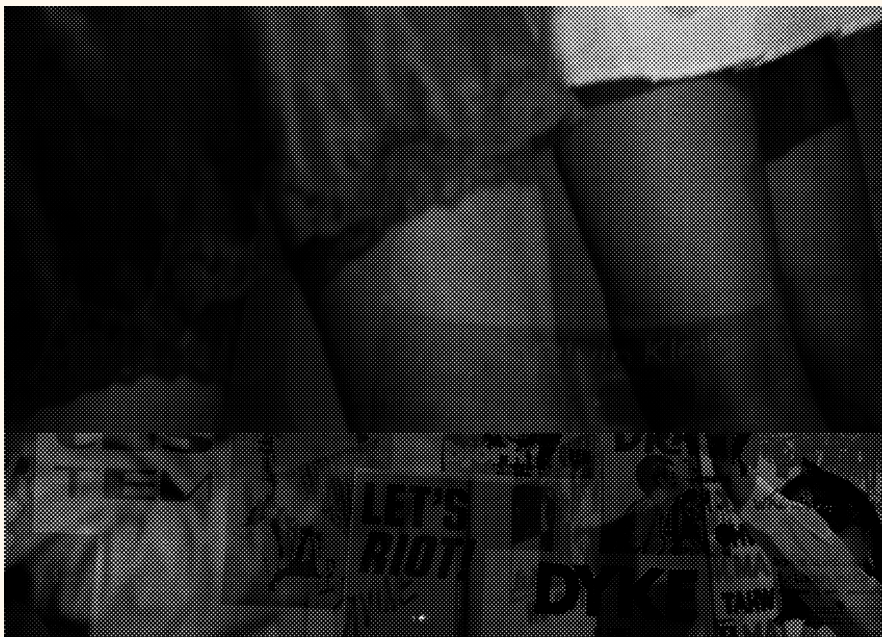


Figure 8 – & Other Parties Section

The Tender Heart of a Tranny

The Tender Heart of a Tranny is based on the experiences Matteo (he/she/they) shared during their interview. One of the key discussions throughout Matteo’s interview was about their gender fluid identity. This identity allows them to “shift” in a sense from one end of the gender spectrum to the other. My goal with this book was to visually represent this shift, thus I landed on a spiral bound book with a series of five rotating covers (Figure 9). Each cover is representative of the different personas that Matteo embodies on a day to day basis by using the same title but different fonts, colours, and aesthetics. The spiral binding

allows for the reader to decide which cover they would like to front at any given moment.

Following each cover are the “guts” of the book (Figure 10). The guts consist of the entire transcript of the interview. This provides a very deep and intimate look into Matteo’s personal experiences that have shaped how they present themselves to the world.

The title of the book “the tender heart of a tranny” is in reference to topics of the interview, which includes the discrimination that Matteo has experienced. These acts of transphobia against Matteo are what lead to the decision to include the slur “tranny” in the title. The contrast of a tender heart paired with the slur tranny, provides a juxtaposition that challenges the word tranny, a word that is devoid of empathy and benevolence. This is further emphasized through the visualization of the “tender heart” by featuring a heart on the verso pages. The heart increases in opacity to emulate the heart growing fonder and the bravery Matteo has exhibited throughout their life.

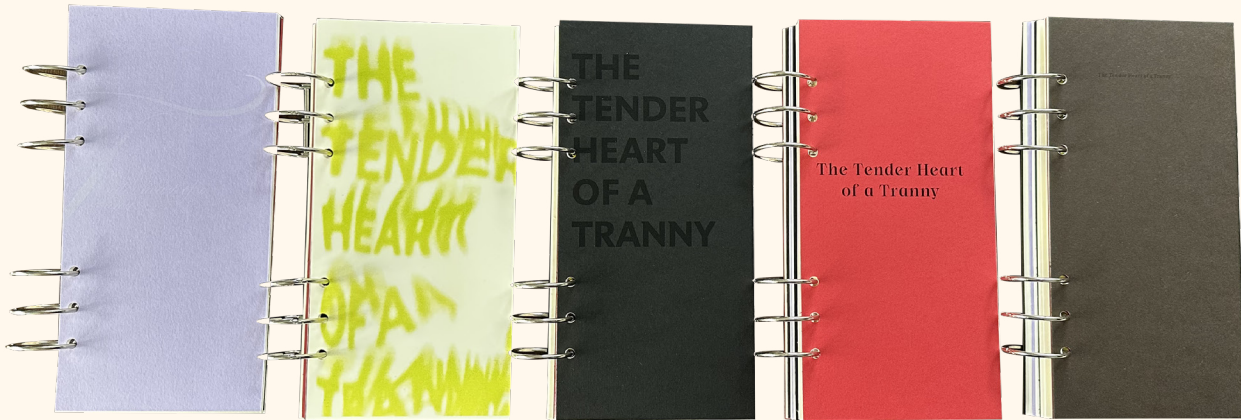


Figure 9 – Rotating Book Covers



Figure 10 – The Guts

A Record of my Soul

A Record of my Soul is based on the experiences AJ (they/them) shared throughout their interview. This book is based on a quote they said during the interview, “My gender and my identity has so much more to do with my mind, my heart, my spirit, the way I love, the art I create, the friends that I keep, my politics” (Figure 11).

The book is encased in a tight flesh toned crocheted cover (Figure 12) with the title embroidered on the front. The crocheted cover is representative of the skin, what is chosen to be presented to the world, the outer shell that encases the “soul” aka the book.

The book is bound using trans tape (Figure 13), a form of gender affirming care that AJ utilizes, and something that reminds AJ of when they first began their transition. The binding holds the book together, but the word “binding” also refers to the act of binding the chest, a form of gender affirming care often used to compress the chest to appear flat, providing feelings of gender euphoria.

“A Record of my Soul” is a collection of memories, photos, art, and quotes that represent what makes up a person, specifically AJ. This book is overflowing with experiences and allows the reader to gain a glimpse into AJ’s life experiences that have helped shape them into who they are today.

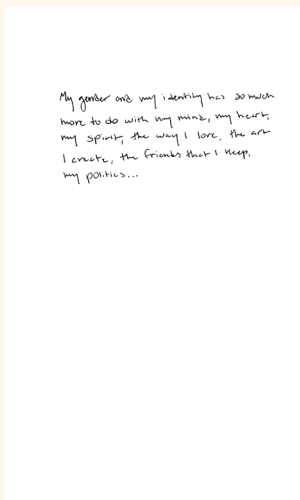


Figure 11 – Record of My Soul Quote

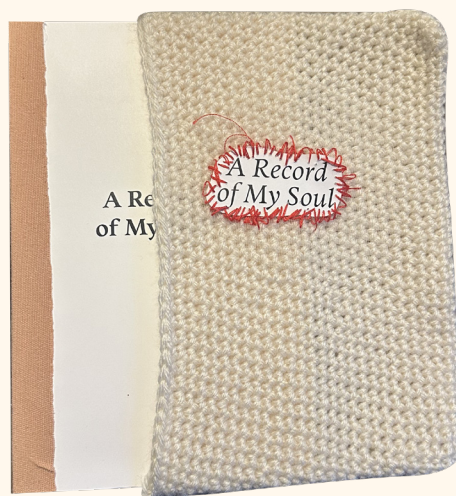


Figure 12 – Record of My Soul Cover



Figure 13 – Trans Tape Binding

Within the book, there are three inserts. The first insert is titled Orlando on her return to self (Figure 14) which includes chapter three of Virginia Woolf’s Orlando. Many trans individuals feel their trans experience is represented through Orlando as he enters a seven day sleep and wakes as a woman in chapter three. There is a countdown featured at the top of each page labeled “Before Return to Self” and “After Return to Self” which countdown to when Orlando awakes.

The second insert is a poem titled Our Dangerous Sweetness By Amir Rabiya (Figure 15), this

poem was sent to me by AJ when asked if there was any media that they felt particularly connected to and that may have helped them in their transition. The poem is heart wrenching and candid about the harsh realities many trans people experience throughout their lives.

The final insert is a small book with photos of the “outside world” (Figure 16), starting with serene photos of the world, they slowly become overwhelmed with anti-trans rhetoric that has been shared online. This book is paired with the quote “When the outside world changes, that is when I will sit down to rest” (Figure 17).

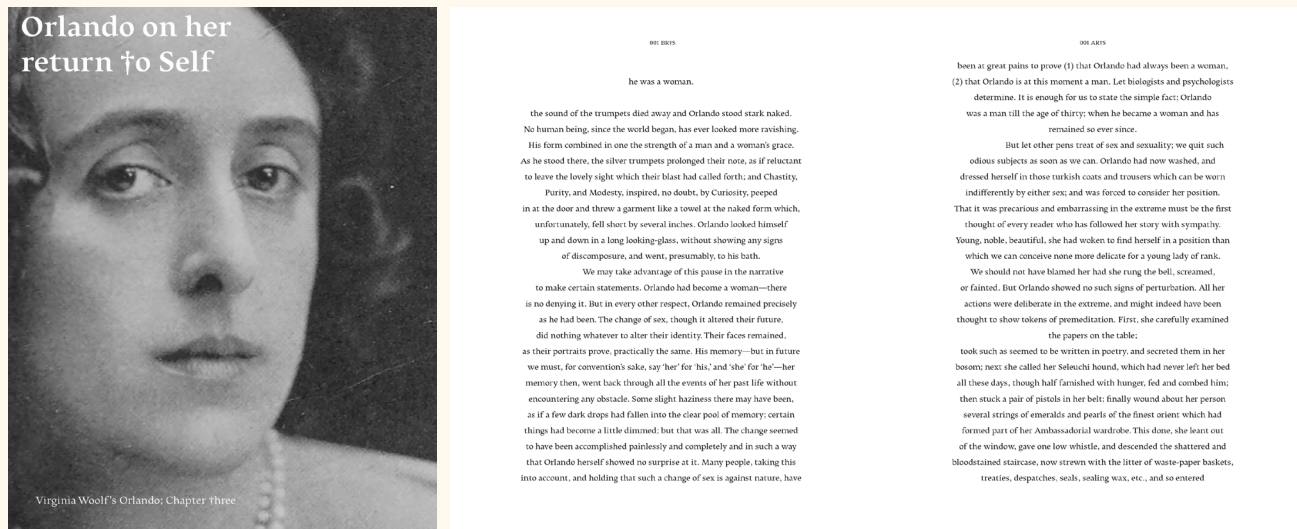


Figure 14 – Orlando Booklet

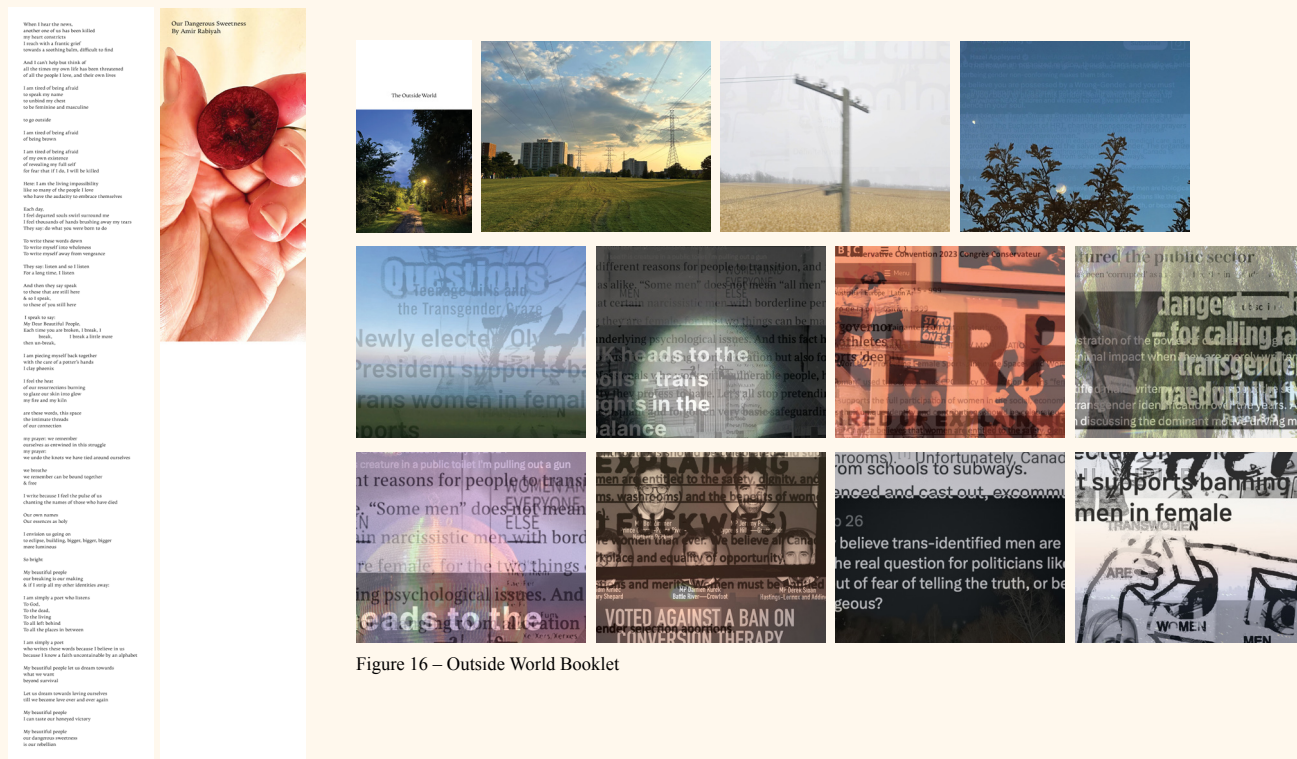


Figure 15 – Our Dangerous Sweetness Poem

When the world outside changes, that
is when I will sit down to rest.

The Outside World



Figure 17 – Outside World Quote

Identifying Commonalities

Throughout my interviews, I was able to identify a number of common themes that relate to each participant, and also relate to my secondary research. I identified three main themes throughout the interviews that also connect to my research from trans scholars and trans individuals who focus on community.

Bystanders

Bystanders have an active role in a situation, whether they acknowledge it or not, when faced with a conflict they have to choose to intervene or to ignore the situation unfolding. The bystander effect can be defined as “a phenomenon in which people fail to offer needed help in emergencies, especially when other people are present in the same setting” (American Psychological Association 2018, p1). The bystander effect is a common theme that was brought up by all three participants as they received public harassment without any intervention from bystanders. Some of these incidents included probing questions, for example Matteo goes into detail about two separate occasions where they were asked probing and uncomfortable questions:

On the St. George subway platform, I was alone, on my way to go meet everybody before we headed to Church and Wellesley for the night. As I’m waiting for the subway, this guy gets up on a bench and I think he was drunk or high or something like that – doesn’t matter. But he started yelling, trying to ask people to place bets on what they think I am, if I’m a man or woman. And of course I already have my guard up since he’s yelling. He then proceeds to come up to me and ask me “are you a man or a woman” and other things of the sort. I just ignored it until the subway arrived, but I also remember looking around like, ‘is nobody going to say shit or is everyone just going to sit here?’ Like I guess I can’t expect anything from other people, but like everyone is looking at someone literally yelling and harassing me, and I’m just like, okay, well, I’m gonna look at all of you just so you know, like, you’re witnessing this and I am witnessing you doing nothing.

There was this one guy on Church and Wellesley, somewhere I feel like I should be safe from these kinds of questions. I was talking to this group of people outside, it was a group of people I didn’t know. I don’t remember what we were talking about, but this older guy starts asking what we identify with and stuff so I explain I use all pronouns; he then proceeds to question me- asking if I have a penis or vagina. I tell him that it’s none of his

business and he proceeds to grope me on the street and then says “oh it’s a penis”. I think that for me, that was one of the first times I was like, what the fuck? Like, that was the craziest thing. And it pissed me off because I get angry at these types of things, but for some reason that was the first time someone had done that to me and my reaction was to leave.

Shuan discusses the bystander effect when they were also harassed on a TTC subway platform “I’ve been spit at, asked if I am a boy or girl, but normally I’m just called a faggot. It’s almost annoying sometimes because, yes, sure I’m fine for the moment, but where were you when the person was berating me? No one even looked really. Everybody just wants to mind their own business, very Toronto subway”. And AJ mentions being asked how far into their transition they are during a singing audition in high school while in front of their peers.

All three participants have experienced unique situations of discrimination, but the underlying themes still stand: the bystander effect, inappropriate probing questions, and uncomfortable encounters with strangers. These themes that were identified were also cited in my research. Namaste (2011) explains

Transsexuals are often required to give their autobiography on demand: How long have you known? Are you operated? How did your family take the news? These kinds of personal questions can provide some insight into the lives of transsexuals, but they are also, in a sense, quite invasive and rude. Within 15 seconds of knowing an individual is transsexual, some [interviewers] feel comfortable enough to ask transsexual individuals to describe the physical appearance and sexual function of their genitals (p4).

These types of questions are prying, intrusive, and a common experience amongst many trans individuals. It is clear that the research Kolysh, Meadows, and Namaste have done links directly to this thesis. The sexualization of trans people is directly linked to the abuse and discrimination they experience. From “chasers”, strangers, family, friends, coworkers, doctors, teachers, and acquaintances, the sexualization of trans people comes from all types of relationships, affecting trans individuals from all angles.

Each book has a section devoted to these themes, the titles *My Body and Other Parties* and *The Tender Heart of a Tranny* are both in reference to the uncomfortable encounters with strangers, the feelings of ownership forced on them, and the sexualization of trans people and their bodies. While *The Tender*

Heart of a Tranny features the entire transcript of the interview with Matteo, My Body and Other Parties is split into two sections, with the second being a reference to the “other parties” that objectify and harass Shuan for their trans identity. A Record of my Soul discusses “the world outside” in reference to the socio-political landscape in western society and the active transphobia that is occurring on a daily basis from both the governments and the cisgendered populations.

Trans Kinship

The facilitation of trans kinship is the main addition that Lu provides when discussing the transgender gaze,

Through this gazing at one another, trans kinship is born. When we look upon other trans beings through the lens of the transgender gaze, our feeling is never one of disgust or repulsion. (...) Through the transgender gaze, we ultimately affirm transness as a way of life and begin to create new queer networks and facilitate ones already there. Building something together requires the recognition of the other, and it is only through the act of gazing, literally or not, that we take the first step toward kinship (Lu 2023, para. 31).

This bond— trans kinship, is formed by a unique understanding of gender, body, and mind. This understanding provides comfort and allyship that allows two trans individuals to connect on a deeper level. One of the participants, AJ, describes this bond:

My relationships with my trans and non-binary friends has deepened, because we have this shared power, this common ground that no two cis people have with each other. I’m sorry. I know they do in another ways, but you’re connecting with a trans person, there is this real understanding um, and this real, like fucking gravity, that just pulls you into another relationship and it makes you hold them a lot tighter.

Both AJ and Lu are describing what feels like an inexplicable force that draws trans individuals together; a trusted bond that is formed and allows the community to grow. Trans people have each other’s backs, they validate this experience for one another in a way that no cisgendered person could. The books designed are facilitating the act of “gazing” specifically the transgender gaze without the need for face to face contact. These books designed are the visualized versions of the participants interviewed, allowing other trans people to “gaze” at the trans participants, forming trans kinship.

Conclusion

My goal of designing for transgender people, for the transgender gaze, was extremely important. I understand what it feels like to recognize that the world is not designed for you, that trans people have to fight for space to be made for them, that is why this thesis and these books are designed to speak directly to the community. My research question, “How can book design highlight commonalities within the broader transgender community and link disparate individuals through shared experience?” strives to connect trans people, to validate their transness and their experiences, and to facilitate trans kinship through the trans reader interacting with the participants book. By conducting these interviews, and establishing shared experiences and connectedness within the collective, I was able to represent these experiences, bringing forward everyday trans individuals to form closer bonds “making visible that which had been ignored” (Hill 2007, p3). These narratives being represented “may actually lead to new ways of living one’s life” (Hill 2007, p3) when trans people are able to recognize their own narratives (in which they may feel alone in experiencing) portrayed through design. Therefore, these books are a purposefully designed space for trans people. They are intended to be gazed at, to conjure feelings of connectedness and validation, and to speak directly to a trans audience. Aspects of the books such as the trans tape binding, the rotating covers, and the poetry featured, all contribute to designing for a trans audience. These design elements act as signals or trans markers that a cisgendered audience may not detect.

From this project I felt validated as a researcher. Before I had explored topics of trans kinship and community, I knew from my own experiences that there was a special bond between trans people. I have experienced what it is like to be excluded from the cisgender population, to find connection within my community, to feel “too trans” for society but “not trans enough” at the same time, however, as I continued with this project, I too connected to the collective. I felt represented, honoured, and seen by these experiences and although this project was not about me, I felt the impacts I knew this project could have. That being said, this project was a small sample size in comparison to what it could be. Expanding this project (perhaps to 12–15 participants) would not only be possible, but would increase visibility, facilitate trans kinship, and strengthen community bonds. The established framework of this project can be mimicked and utilized by other trans researchers and designers. I do believe that one of the main reasons why this project was successful is because of my own trans identity, designing a project for trans people requires knowledge and sensitivity that a cisgender researcher may not be privy to. When it comes to representing an experience through design, misrepresentation is a far easier task. That is why a fundamental understanding of these feelings and experiences is necessary for success.

The natural next steps for this project is to continue on the path I originally intended to take, travel to major cities in Canada to meet and talk to trans people, forming a collective using the snowball technique and expanding the amount of people I talk to. This project had its limitations, one of them being that I only interviewed participants who identified as non-binary or gender fluid, and in the expansion of this project my hopes would be to expand my criteria to now include trans men and women. All trans people provide a unique perspective that is insightful and informative, thus the more people within the collective, the broader the reach this project has.

If there is one thing I would like cisgendered people to gather from this project, it is to fight for your trans population. Uplift their voices, support them, listen and learn from them. To my trans family, I hope this project allows for you to see your community and know that your community sees you. Lean on them for support, guidance, and kinship.

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Appendix A - Interview Script

Before we start I want to confirm that you have read the consent form?

The goal of this project is to explore trans identity, specifically those who identify as non-binary, in a way that highlights the body, emotions, shared experiences, and creative outlets that may have helped you better understand or come to terms with your trans identity.

The outcome of these interviews will result in a book or books, the number of books will only be determined once all interviews have been completed. The general idea is to translate these emotions, understandings, and connections into the book form and how the book form can possibly represent the body.

Because of this outcome please try and use descriptive words, such as big, small, happy, sad, scared, bitter, fast, beautiful. Words that can help me visualize the design outcome.

If there is ever a time where you feel uncomfortable and/or do not want to answer a question that is okay, we can always skip questions or come back to them later. You can also ask for as many breaks as you may need.

How do you identify?

Can you define that term?

At what age did you start to recognize gender as an important role in your life?

Can you describe the moments you first realized/considered you may be transgender?

What kind of emotions were you experiencing when you first realized?

How did that emotion settle? /did that emotion ever settle?

How did you feel about your body when you first recognized your trans identity?

How do you feel about your body now?

How do you think others perceive your body?

How do you think they feel about your body? Has this been expressed to you? How did that make you feel?

Do you think your body is important in relation to your gender?

When was the first time you engaged in gender affirming behavior?

What made you want to engage?

How did that make you feel?

Do you still experience that same feeling now? If not, how has it changed?

How do you feel you fit into the trans community?

Do you feel that your trans identity has impacted your relationship with other people in your life?

Who do you find yourself most connected to in your life as of right now?

Have you ever been discriminated against because of your trans identity? Can you tell me about a time that sticks out in your mind?

What emotions were you experiencing while it happened?

How do you feel about it now?

What do you want your future to look like?

How do you feel when thinking about your future?

Who in your life do you hope to see in your future?

Do you have any concerns about issues that I haven't asked? Is there anything else you think I should know?

Appendix B - Consent Form

Informed Consent Form

Date: _____

Study Name: Oral Histories of Transgender Coming Out Narratives

Researchers:

Peri Agate
Full time
Master of Design
4008 Victor Dahdelah Building (DB), 4700 Keele St., Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Gabi Schaffzin
gabis@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

I will be interviewing three transgender individuals about their experience coming out and the emotions they faced throughout that process. I will then design personalized books based off of the findings from these interviews and use the form of these books to embody the emotions these individuals experienced.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research: Participants will be interviewed about personal experiences that they have endured during their coming out process and the emotions they felt during these experiences. They will also be asked to share any material outlet they may have used to manage these emotions (poetry, writing, music, art, design, photography, ect.) if they wish. The entire interview process should take approximately 90 to 120 minutes. Participants will be offered a \$50 gift card as inducement for their participation. Please note there may be a requirement for followup questions at times other than the initial interview.

Risks and Discomforts: Participants have the option to not answer any questions that have psychological/emotional risks. Participants will also have the right to redact any names, information, or material outlets if they decide they would no longer wish to include these aspects. Breaks can/will be offered to participants if there appears to be any psychological/emotional risks occurring.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You: The benefits of the project include contributing and documenting the rich history of transgender individuals in Canada.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: *Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the treatment you may be receiving. The nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or study staff, the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future.*

"If you stop participating, you will still be eligible to receive the \$50 gift card for agreeing to be in the project, even if you withdraw without completion of the research." In the event you withdraw from the study, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible or, should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality: *Unless you choose otherwise all information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research.*

The principal investigator will keep a link that identifies you to your coded information, but this link will be kept secure and available only to the principal investigator and/or selected members of the research team. Any information that can identify you will remain confidential.

The data will be collected via handwritten notes, audio tapes, and digital devices. Your data will be safely stored in a locked facility and password protected hard drive and only research staff/research team members will have access to this information. The data will be stored until the project is complete and the thesis has been approved, anticipated before April 30th 2025. Once the project is complete the project outcome may be submitted to a transgender archive organization. The design outcomes will feature quotes and any other creative material output provided by participants. All participants will be notified about the works submission to an archive and will have the right to refuse, if you refuse all design outcomes that feature any identifying information will not be submitted. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

Questions About the Research? *If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact Peri Agate by e-mail pagate@my.yorku.ca and to contact the Department of Design you can contact them at desn@yorku.ca. This research has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Manager, Research Ethics in the Office of Research Ethics, York University (e-mail ore@yorku.ca). This office oversees the ethical conduct of research studies and is not part of the study team. Everything that you discuss will be kept confidential.*

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____, consent to participate in _____ conducted by Peri Agate. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____
Participant

Date _____

Signature _____
Principal Investigator

Date _____

Additional consent (where applicable)

You must seek additional consent by including check boxes or requesting additional signatures for the following:

1. Audio recording (optional)

I consent to the audio-recording of my interview(s).

2. Consent to waive anonymity (optional)

I, _____ consent to the use of my name in the publications arising from this research.

3. Consent to use of quotes

I consent to the use of quotations in any final reports/ publications of the research? Y / N

Appendix C - Ethics

Form TD1: Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal

Submit completed research proposals to your graduate program office. DO NOT submit forms directly to the Office of Research Ethics (ORE).

Student Information		
Surname <i>Agate</i>	Given name(s) <i>Peri</i>	
Student number <i>217046160</i>	E-mail <i>pagate@my.yorku.ca</i>	Phone <i>(613) 413-6800</i>
Program - please select - <i>Design (MDes)</i>	Degree & year of study - please select - <i>Master's 2</i>	Current status - please select - <i>Full time</i>
Title of Research Proposal		
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Project		

Type of Research	Documents to submit
Please check one:	Programs will forward the following electronically to the Office of the Dean, Graduate Studies
<input type="checkbox"/> A No human participants, no animals, no biohazards and no secondary data analysis	<input type="checkbox"/> TD1 <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation Proposal
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> B Human participants, minimum risk	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TD1 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation Proposal <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TD2 <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Sample informed consent and other relevant documents <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TCPS Tutorial Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> C Secondary Data Analysis not conducted as part of a faculty research project	<input type="checkbox"/> TD1 <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> TD2 <input type="checkbox"/> Informed consent and other relevant documents if applicable <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> TCPS Tutorial Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> D Research involving Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples	<input type="checkbox"/> TD1 <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> HPRC Protocol Form <input type="checkbox"/> Sample informed consent and other relevant documents <input type="checkbox"/> Checklist for Researchers: Research Involving Aboriginal People <input type="checkbox"/> TCPS Tutorial Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> E Human Participants, data collected under faculty research grant with HPRC Approval Certificate	<input type="checkbox"/> TD1 (signed by student, supervisor, and graduate program director) <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis/Dissertation Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> TD4 <input type="checkbox"/> HPRC Approval Certificate for Supervisor's research project <input type="checkbox"/> TCPS Tutorial Certificate
<input type="checkbox"/> F Animals or biohazards (must be under faculty supervision)	<input type="checkbox"/> TD1 <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis /Dissertation Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> TD4 (original + 1 copy) <input type="checkbox"/> Animal Care Committee (ACC), or Biosafety Committee (BCC) Approval Certificate for Supervisor's research project
<input type="checkbox"/> G <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human Participants, more than minimal risk, or • Research involving Clinical Trials 	<input type="checkbox"/> TD1 <input type="checkbox"/> Thesis /Dissertation Proposal <input type="checkbox"/> HPRC Protocol Form <input type="checkbox"/> Sample informed consent and other relevant documents <input type="checkbox"/> TCPS Tutorial Certificate

Risk Assessment for the Researcher	Documents to Submit
<input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No The proposed research poses elevated risk to myself as the researcher requiring further health and safety considerations. (Please consult the Graduate Student Risk Assessment Guidelines for information regarding risk assessment and planning.)	<input type="checkbox"/> If 'Yes', Graduate Student Risk Assessment Form

TD1 = Thesis/Dissertation Research Proposal Form | **TD2** = Research Ethics Protocol Form for Graduate Students
TD4 = Statement of Relationship between Proposal and an Existing HPRC Approved Project
TCPS = Tri-Council Policy Statement: Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans Tutorial Course on Research Ethics

**Student Signature**

I hereby certify that all information on this form and all statements in the attached documentation are correct and complete.

Peri Agate
Student NamePeri Agate
Student Signature02/12/2025
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)**Supervisor Recommendation**

I confirm that I have read the documentation and the appropriateness of its inclusion, and that it accurately summarizes the research project. I recommend the Faculty of Graduate Studies approve the proposal for the above student. The Supervisory Committee has reviewed the Research Proposal and research ethics protocols (if applicable) and has recommended it be submitted for FGS approval.

 I attest that the Supervisory Committee has reviewed the Research Proposal and research ethics protocols (if applicable) and has recommended it be submitted for FGS approval. (If this box is not checked, all members of the Supervisory Committee must sign this form below.)GABI SCHARFELN
Supervisor NameGabi Scharfeln
Supervisor Signature2/12/2025
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)ANGELA NORWOOD
Supervisory Committee Member NameAngela Norwood
Supervisory Committee Member Signature02/12/2025
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Supervisory Committee Member Name

Supervisory Committee Member Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Graduate Program Director Recommendation

I recommend the Faculty of Graduate Studies approve the proposal for the above student. The Supervisory Committee has reviewed the Research Proposal and research ethics protocols (if applicable) and has recommended it be submitted for FGS approval.

GATMICK ALCEDO
Graduate Program Director NameGatmick Alcedo
Graduate Program Director Signature02/12/2025
Date (mm/dd/yyyy)**Faculty of Graduate Studies Recommendation**

I approve the proposal for the above student.

Associate Dean, FGS Name

Associate Dean, FGS Signature

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Privacy: Personal information in connection with this form is collected under the authority of The York University Act, 1965 and will be used for educational, administrative and statistical purposes. If you have any questions about the collection, use and disclosure of personal information by York University, please contact: Faculty of Graduate Studies, 230 York Lanes, (416) 736-2100 x 55521.

Part A – General Information**A. Student Information**

Student Name <i>Peri Agate</i>		Date (mm/dd/yyyy)
E-mail <i>pagate@my.yorku.ca</i>	Phone <i>(613) 413-6800</i>	Student number <i>217046160</i>
Program <i>Design (MDes)</i>		Degree <i>Master of Design</i>
Check one: <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Thesis <input type="checkbox"/> Dissertation <input type="checkbox"/> Pilot Project		
Title of Research Project <i>Trans Narratives Through Oral History and Design</i>		
Name of Supervisor <i>Gabi Schaffzin</i>		
Is this a revised version of a protocol previously submitted to FGS and/or HPRC <input type="checkbox"/> Yes <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> No		
Proposed start date for research involving human participants (mm/dd/yyyy) 08/01/2024 <i>12/01/2024</i>		

1. Is this research defined as:

- Minimal Risk?
 More than Minimal Risk?

If More than Minimal Risk, do NOT use this TD2 form. Submit HPRC Protocol.

The HPRC uses the definition of minimal risk as outlined in the SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) "Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans" (December 2014): "If potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk" (p. 1.5). An expanded version of this definition is available from ORE upon request.

NOTE: Full board review is required for ALL research that is more than minimal risk. A full board review requires a meeting of the Human Participants Review Committee (HPRC) for the purposes of providing final approval and which, as a consequence, may take longer to review.

2. Does this research involve clinical trials?

- No Yes

If Yes, do NOT use this TD2 form. Submit HPRC Protocol.

3. Is this research part of a faculty-led research project for which a faculty member is the Principal Investigator?

- No Yes

If Yes, do NOT use this TD2 form. Instead, please attach TD4, Statement of Relationship between Proposal and Existing Approved Research/Facilities, as well as a copy of the HPRC Approval Certificate.

4. Does this research involve animals or biohazards?

- No Yes

Part A – General Information continued

A. Student Information continued

Name of Supervisor

Is this a revised version of a protocol previously submitted to FGS and/or HPRC? No Yes

Proposed start date for research involving human participants (mm/dd/yyyy):

1. Is this research defined as:

- Minimal Risk?
 More than Minimal Risk?

If More than Minimal Risk, do NOT use this TD2 form. Submit [HPRC Protocol](#).

The HPRC uses the definition of minimal risk as outlined in the SSHRC/NSERC/CIHR Tri-Council Policy Statement (TCPS) “Ethical Conduct for Research involving Humans” (December 2014): “If potential subjects can reasonably be expected to regard the probability and magnitude of possible harms implied by participation in the research to be no greater than those encountered by the subject in those aspects of his or her everyday life that relate to the research then the research can be regarded as within the range of minimal risk” (p. 1.5). An expanded version of this definition is available from ORE upon request.

NOTE: Full board review is required for ALL research that is more than minimal risk. A full board review requires a meeting of the Human Participants Review Committee (HPRC) for the purposes of providing final approval and which, as a consequence, may take longer to review.

2. Does this research involve clinical trials?

- No Yes

If Yes, do NOT use this TD2 form. Submit [HPRC Protocol](#).

3. Does your research involve Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples?

- No Yes

The following questions may assist in determining whether your research involves Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples:

- Will the research be conducted on Aboriginal land (Canada; international) for which permission and/or approval from an authority (such as band council, First Nations Research Ethics Board, etc.) may be required? No Yes
- Will recruitment criteria include Aboriginal identity as either a factor for the entire study or for a subgroup of the study? No Yes
- Will the research seek input from participants regarding an Aboriginal Peoples’ cultural heritage, artefacts, or traditional knowledge? No Yes
- Will research in which Aboriginal identity or membership in an Aboriginal community be used as a variable for the purpose of analysis of the research data? No Yes
- Will interpretation of research results refer to Aboriginal communities, peoples, language, history or culture? No Yes

(Note: “Research” does not include literary criticism and/or history (excluding oral history) and/or primarily textual activities)

If you have answered “yes” to any of the above noted questions, then your research involves Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples. If Yes, do NOT use this TD2 form. Submit HPRC Protocol. Researchers are required to familiarize themselves with the [Guidelines for Research involving Aboriginal Peoples](#) and complete the [Checklist for Researchers — Research Involving Aboriginal Peoples](#). Note that research involving Aboriginal/Indigenous Peoples will first be reviewed by the Aboriginal Research Ethics Advisory Group (AREAG) prior to being forwarded to the HPRC. Researchers may receive initial comments from the AREAG for which a response will be required.

4. Is this research part of a faculty-led research project for which a faculty member is the Principal Investigator? No Yes

If Yes, do NOT use this TD2 form. Instead, please attach [TD4, Statement of Relationship between Proposal and Existing Approved Research/Facilities](#), as well as a copy of the HPRC Approval Certificate.

5. Does this research involve animals or biohazards? No Yes

If Yes, do NOT use this TD2 form. All student research involving animals or biohazards must be under faculty supervision. Please attach [TD4, Statement of Relationship between Proposal and Existing Approved Research/Facilities](#), as well as a copy of the HPRC Approval Certificate.

6. Are you conducting secondary data analysis? No Yes

If yes, please review the [Secondary Data Analysis Guidelines](#) and ensure that you complete section B. 8 below.

NOTE: Secondary Data Analysis is described as the analysis of data collected for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected in order to pursue a research interest which is distinct from that of the original work. Researchers are advised to review the Secondary Data Analysis Guidelines for further information on requirements related to use of secondary data for research purposes.

7. Is any anticipated funding* for this project from any external (i.e., outside York) sources? No Yes

If yes, what is the funding agency and/or program?

*The definition of "funded" does not include funding in the form of student OGS scholarships, SSHRC fellowships, NSERC scholarships, or CIHR awards. These awards are intended to support students through their studies and do not require reports from students on the specific research activities conducted. The definition of "funded" does apply to grants awarded for specific research projects, whether those projects be the student's own research projects or research being conducted as part of a faculty member's funded research project. Typically, for "funded" research, granting agencies require reports of the research conducted.

8. Does this research involve another institution? Research involving another institution (such as a school, university, business, government agency) may require additional ethics review and approval or permissions if using institutional resources (such as internal listservs, or conducting interviews on the premises of the institution).

 No Yes

NOTE: If the research is to be conducted at a site requiring ethics approval or administrative permission, please include all draft informed consent forms/administrative permission requests. It is the responsibility of the researcher to determine what other means of clearance are required, and to obtain clearance prior to starting the project.

a. Do any of the institution(s)/site(s) have an ethics review board? No Yes

If 'Yes', specify the institution(s)/site(s):

b. Do any of the institution(s)/site(s) require administrative permission? No Yes

If 'Yes', specify the institution(s)/site(s) and provide a copy of the letter of permission:

- c. Has any other Research Ethics Board (REB) cleared this project? No Yes

If 'Yes', please submit the original application and provide a copy of the clearance letter.

Part B – Research Information

1. Project Description

In layperson's terms, please provide a general and brief description of the research (e.g., hypotheses, goals and objectives, etc.).

2. Participants

State who the participant(s) will be: Describe the participants that will be recruited and about whom personal information will be collected (i.e., numbers, age, special characteristics, etc.). Describe the size of the group from which participants will be recruited and the estimated number needed for the research (minimum/maximum). Where active recruitment is required, please describe inclusion and exclusion criteria. Where the research involves extraction or collection of personal information, please describe from whom the information will be obtained and what it will include (*include permission letters*).

- This study will be using a participant pool

Please indicate which participant pool(s):

- URPP
- Schulich Marketing Pool
- School of Administrative Studies participant pool
- KURE
- Glendon Participant Pool
- Other:

3. Recruitment

a. **How will participants be recruited** (e.g., snowball technique, random sampling, previously known to interviewer, telephone solicitation, etc.)?

b. **Will you be using any advertisements, flyers, posters, email scripts, social media postings, etc. for recruitment purpose?**

No Yes If 'Yes', please attach a copy of each with your application.

4. Inducements

a. **Will you be offering inducements to participate** (e.g., money, gift certificates, academic credit, etc.)?

No Yes
If yes, please elaborate:

(Please check all that apply)

- Financial
- In-kind
- Draw
- Participant Pool Bonus Points
- Other:

b. If inducements are provided, please provide the source of funding for them:

5. Methods

a. Please indicate **all** the research methods that apply:

- | | |
|---|--|
| <input type="checkbox"/> Action Research | <input type="checkbox"/> Ethnography |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Observation | <input type="checkbox"/> Survey |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Documentary Filmmaking | <input type="checkbox"/> Focus Group |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experimental lab study | <input type="checkbox"/> Interview |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Oral/Life history | <input type="checkbox"/> Human Tissues |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Experimental behavioural study | <input type="checkbox"/> Online Research |
| <input type="checkbox"/> Other: | |

b. Do any of the methods involve:

Audio Recording? No Yes
Photographic Recording? No Yes
Video Recording? No Yes

- Please note that explicit consent is required to use these methods of recording. Please see Section 10, Informed Consent for details.
- If you are using recordings, you will be required to account for how they will be safely stored, eventually destroyed or archived, and how, if used in research dissemination, confidentiality will be maintained. Please see Section 11, Data Security for details.

c. What will be required of the participant(s)? Clearly specify in a step-by-step outline exactly what the participant(s) will be asked to do in each methodology. A separate outline is required for each methodology. Include the settings, types of

information to be involved, and how data will be analyzed. Include details about identifying participants, recruitment, procedures participants will undertake, etc. Include copies of study instruments. Please also include the estimated time commitment required of participants for each method.

d. What is the experience and training of the researcher with this kind of research? If applicable, please provide a description of the supervisor's support for this research.

6. Risk

Please indicate potential risks that the participants as individuals or as part of an identifiable group or community might experience by being part of this research project:

- | | | |
|--|-----------------------------|------------------------------|
| a. Physical risks (including any bodily contact; administration of any substance)? | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| b. Psychological/emotional risks (feeling uncomfortable, embarrassed, anxious, upset)? | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| c. Social risks (including possible loss of status, privacy and/or reputation)? | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| d. Data security (i.e., risk to participant from data exposure)? | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| e. Tied to deception involved in the study? (See DEBRIEFING section below) | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |
| f. OTHER: | <input type="checkbox"/> No | <input type="checkbox"/> Yes |

g. No known or anticipated risk:

If you answered yes to any of the above, please describe how each of the potential risks described above will be managed and/or minimized:

7. Benefits

What, if any, are the benefits to the participants?

Or, No benefits

a. Discuss any potential direct benefits to the participants from their involvement in the project; these might include education about research methods, useful knowledge gained about self, etc.

b. Comment on the (potential) benefits to the scientific/scholarly community or society that would justify involvement of participants in this study.

8. Secondary Analysis of Data

NOTE: Secondary Data Analysis is described as the analysis of data involving human participants collected for a purpose other than that for which it was originally collected in order to pursue a research interest which is distinct from that of the original work. Researchers are advised to review the [Secondary Data Analysis Guidelines](#) for further information on requirements related to use of secondary data for research purposes.

- a. Are you conducting Secondary Data Analysis? No Yes

If "No", please GO TO QUESTION 9

If "yes" please answer the following questions:

- i. Are you using **anonymous data** (data which never included personal identifiers)
 No Yes

If 'Yes,' please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

NOTE: Research that relies **solely** on secondary analysis of anonymous data is exempt from ethics review.

- ii. Are you using **anonymized data**? (data which has been stripped of personal identifiers; no potential for data linkage)
 No Yes

If 'Yes,' please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

- iii. Are you using **identifiable data**:

No Yes

If 'Yes,' please provide a description of the provenance of the data set:

- b. If you are conducting secondary analysis **using identifiable data**, please address the following:

- i. Do you plan to link this identifiable data to other data sets?

No Yes

If 'Yes', please describe:

- ii. What type of identifiable data from this data set are you planning to access and use?

- Student records (please specify in the space below)
 Health records/clinic/office files (please specify in the space below)
 Other personal records (please specify in the space below)

iii. What personally identifiable data (e.g., name, student number, telephone number, date of birth, etc.) from this data set do you plan on using in your research? Please explain why you need to collect this identifiable data and justify why each item is required to conduct your research.

iv. Describe the details of any agreement you have, or will have, in place with the owner of this data to allow you to use these data for your research. **ATTACHMENTS: Submit a copy of any data use/access agreements.**

v. When participants first contributed their data to this data set, were there any known preferences expressed by participants at that time about how their information would be used in the future?

No Yes

If 'Yes', please explain.

vi. How will you obtain consent from the participants whose identifiable data you will be accessing? Please explain.

Note: Consent of the participants is required for research involving secondary analysis of data that includes personal identifiers. Waiver of consent may only be considered if researchers meet the additional criteria. Please consult the [Secondary Data Analysis Guidelines](#) for further information.

vii. If you do *not* intend to seek consent of participants for use of identifiable data for secondary analysis, please provide a rationale as to why:

9. Conflict of Interest

a. Is there a possibility of an apparent, actual, or potential conflict of interest on the part of researchers, the University, or sponsors? (e.g., commercialization of research findings, self-funded research, etc.)

No Yes

If yes, please elaborate and outline how the potential or real conflict of interest will be addressed:

b. Do any members of the research team have multiple roles with potential participants (e.g., researcher and therapist, researcher and teacher, student/supervisor, teaching assistant and students, etc.)

No Yes If 'Yes', please review [Research Involving Investigators' Students](#)

i) Describe the nature of the multiple roles between researcher(s) and any participants

ii) Describe how the potential conflict of interest that will emerge as a result of the dual roles will be minimized or managed

c. Are there any restrictions regarding access to or disclosure of information/results/data at any point during the study including completion that the funder/sponsor has placed on the researchers? (These include controls placed by sponsors, funding sources, advisory or steering committees.)

No Yes

If 'Yes', please describe:

10. Informed Consent

This section pertains to issues around informed consent.

a. Is there a relationship between participants and either of the following:

Principal Investigator: No Yes
Person obtaining consent (if other than the PI): No Yes Not applicable

If 'Yes', what steps will be taken to avoid the perception of undue influence in obtaining free and informed consent?

b. Ongoing consent is required if the research occurs over multiple sessions or over an extended period of time. Does the research occur over multiple occasions and/or over an extended period of time (i.e., beyond 6 months)?

No Yes

If 'Yes', please describe the process of how you intend to obtain *ongoing* consent?

c. Is substitute consent involved (e.g., recruiting individuals under 16; those without capacity to consent)?

No Yes

If 'Yes', please elaborate on how consent and assent will be obtained. Please attach 1) Substitute Consent Form for the parent/guardian, and 2) Assent Form for the participant which includes all information required in the consent form but is written in age appropriate language.

d. Is deception involved? Specifically, do you intend to withhold any information from and/or intentionally mislead the research participants?

No Yes

If 'No', please go to question "e"

If 'Yes':

i) Please provide a description of the nature of the deception and whether it is full or partial. Please provide a rationale as to why deception (in whole or part) is required:

ii) Please append a copy of the debriefing statement

The debriefing statement needs to explain three elements:

(i) Why the experiment was developed and why the deception was necessary.

(ii) What the current research says about the topic, which includes providing two references (text, article, on-line reference) that the participants can reasonably access and understand (if you have an academic and non-academic population, you may need to provide more than one version of the debriefing statement or make sure that the references can be accessed by the least educated of the population).

(iii) Any additional resources that would be useful for the participant. Resources need to be appropriate and accessible for the participants. For example, if you are conducting a study on parenting, you could include community resources for parenting classes or recommendations for parenting guides. (source: Univ. Virginia, IRB)

Researchers must re-obtain consent from the participants once the debriefing statement has been provided. Participants shall be provided with and sign the [Debriefing Consent Form](#).

iii) If a debriefing statement will not be provided to the participants, please provide a rationale as to why a statement will not be provided:

iv) For studies that are not deceptive, briefly describe the process and nature of any immediate post-study information that will be provided to participants and the rationale for providing this information (e.g., counselling or trauma resources, information links, etc.):

e. How will informed consent be obtained? (Please check all that are applicable):

- Informed Consent Form. Please attach draft version. Attach Substitute Consent Form and Assent Form if applicable.
- Verbal Consent. If informed consent is being obtained verbally, please provide a rationale regarding why verbal consent may be necessary and an Informed Consent Form is not being used. Please note that verbal consent is permissible in only exceptional circumstances where written consent is not feasible or inappropriate. Please attach draft Verbal Consent Script of what participants will be verbally told.
- Online consent form. Please attach draft version. If online consent is being obtained, please indicate the website where the questionnaire/survey will be hosted:

11. Data Security

Privacy refers to an individual's right to be free from intrusion or interference by others. It is a fundamental right in a free and democratic society. The ethical duty of confidentiality refers to the obligation of an individual or organization to safeguard entrusted information. Security refers to measures used to protect information. It includes physical, administrative and technical safeguards.

For a fuller description of researcher obligations surrounding confidentiality, privacy and data security issues, please consult the [Data Security Guidelines for Research Involving Human Participants](#).

In light of the above, please address the following questions:

a. Will the data be treated as confidential? No Yes

If "No", please provide a rationale:

b. Will the participant(s) be anonymous? No Yes

If "No", please provide a rationale:

c. Describe the procedures to be used to ensure anonymity/confidentiality of participants (where applicable) –or– the confidentiality of data during the conduct of research and dissemination of results, such as data anonymization.

d. Please describe how you plan to store hard copy data securely, i.e., consent forms and other written records. Note that consent forms must be stored for 2 years.

- Locked filing cabinet
- Other

e. Please describe how you plan to store electronic data securely (such as video/audio recordings and document files)

- Encrypted and/or password-protected USB keys, laptops and/or other portable electronic data devices
- Secure Server
- Other

f. Please describe how you plan to store other formats of data (if applicable):

g. If you plan to destroy research data,

- provide a firm date by which the data will be destroyed (mm/dd/yyyy):

- provide details of their final disposal

- for hard copy data (e.g., cross-cut shredder, etc.)

- for electronic data (e.g., deletion and overwriting of drives; destruction of drives; etc.)

h. If you plan to retain data indefinitely, please provide a justification (e.g., data use for future research):

i. Describe any limitations to protecting the confidentiality of participants whether due to the law, the methods used, the nature of the sample population, or other reasons (e.g., duty to report) that you are aware of.

j. Identify all parties who will have access to the data.

- Primary Investigator/student
- Supervisor
- Other (please specify):

k. Uses of the data: Please describe all forms of output that are anticipated to result from this research (e.g., presentations, written papers, placing data in an archive, creative works, documentary films, etc.). Describe how any potentially identifying information will be handled in each form of output.

l. Subsequent use of data: Will the data potentially be used for other purposes in the future (e.g., teaching, future analysis, publishing of dataset, archiving in an institutional repository, etc.)?

- No Yes

If 'No', the data will be solely used for the purposes described in this application and will not be used for other purposes in the future.

If 'Yes', participants must be informed of this possibility during the consent process. Subsequent use of the data for new purposes may require additional review by the REB.

If 'Yes', please describe how the data will be prepared to make it suitable for future use (e.g., anonymization, storage, archiving, etc.). Please describe what future uses might occur (e.g., use within the PI's research group, transmission to other researchers, publication of the dataset, etc.). Please identify any known repositories to which data may be submitted. (The REB recognizes that all potential future uses cannot be anticipated, but does expect that data will be prepared in a manner for future uses that respects the conditions under which the data were originally collected.)

12. Additional Information

Is there any additional information that you would like to add that may assist the HPRC in reviewing your protocol?

Part C – Declarations

Student Declaration

I hereby certify that all information on this form and all statements in the attached documentation are correct and complete. I have examined the guidelines and principles detailed above, and the Senate Policy for Research Involving Human Participants, and affirm that, to the best of my knowledge, this research conforms thereto. I affirm that I have informed all members of my research team of their responsibilities as it speaks to the conduct of research involving human participants and as outlined in the Senate Policy for Research Involving Human Participants. I have advised all research team members that all human participants in the research must have signed a written consent form or have provided oral consent for their participation in the research. I hereby undertake to notify the Human Participants Review Committee via the Office of Research Ethics (HPRC) if I make changes involving the use of human participants on this project and submit the required documents (e.g. Amendment request) to HPRC for review and approval; if these changes are not minor, my research proposal may be required to undergo a further ethics review. I understand that any misrepresentation in the proposal or attached documentation may lead to a charge of breach of academic honesty. In the case of an adverse/unanticipated event, I will notify HPRC. I also understand that I must retain Consent Forms for two years following the completion of the research. I will also notify HPRC if any unforeseen risks not specified in the research proposal appear. In such a case, the study will be suspended pending clarification.

Peri Agate

Signature of Student

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Supervisor Declaration

I hereby certify that all information on this form and all statements in the attached documentation are correct and complete. I have advised the student that all human participants in the research must have signed a written consent form or have provided oral consent for their participation in the research. I have advised the student that the Human Participants Review Committee via the Office of Research Ethics (HPRC) will be advised of any changes in research methodology or any increased anticipated risks to human participants and that a further ethics review and approval is required as a result of such changes. I have advised the student that Consent Forms must be retained for two years following the completion of the research.

Signature of supervisor (of Thesis/Dissertation)

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Section to insert Digital Signatures (if applicable):

Electronic Signature of Principal Investigator (PI)

Date (mm/dd/yyyy)

Document Checklist

Please attach the following items, if applicable, to TD2, Graduate Student Human Participants Research Protocol.

Incomplete forms will not be accepted for review.

1 All TD2 forms must have the following attached:

- a. Informed Consent Form(s)
- b. TCPS Certificate

2 Other Consent Documents (if applicable):

- Substitute Consent form (Parental/Guardian consent) — required if your research participants are under 16 years of age or without capacity to consent
- Assent Form — required if your research involves substitute consent
- Verbal Consent Script — required if you plan to seek verbal consent for any of the research participants
- On-line Consent Script — required if participants are asked to consent online

3 External permission and approvals (if applicable):

- Decisions Needed From Other REB Boards — required if your research requires ethics approval from an institution other than York University
- External REB approval required — certificate attached
- External institutional permission required — documentation provided
- Internal institutional permission/approval required (e.g., OIPA) — documentation provided
- Medical directive
- Research Agreement(s) — append all copies
- Data use/access agreements (for use in secondary data analysis)

4 Test Instruments (if applicable):

- Questionnaires and Test Instruments
- Draft interview questions, focus group questions

5 Recruitment (if applicable):

- Recruitment Materials: Posters, Letters, Participant Pool Advertisement, etc.

6 Debriefing (if applicable):

- Debriefing Letter — required if your research involves deception (see Section 10, Informed Consent for details)
- Debriefing Consent Document — required following administration of debriefing statement (if your research involves deception)

7 Other (if applicable):

- Provenance of Anonymous Data
- Research Team Member Confidentiality Agreement
- Participant Images Informed Consent Addendum