Remembering and Forgetting: Archiving Queer and Trans 'south asian' organizing in Toronto

Anu Radha Verma

Report of a Major Portfolio submitted to the Faculty of Environmental Studies in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the degree of Master in Environmental Studies, York University, Ontario Canada

_____   _____

Anu Radha Verma   **Dr. Shobna Nijhawan**
Student   **Supervisor**

Date of Submission: November 30, 2015

Abstract

This work considers the ways memory, history, community and activism come together. It is an autoethnography that speaks to the specificities of queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing and activism in Toronto.

Queer/Trans 'south asians' in Toronto can be understood as a heterogeneous set of communities whose individual and group-identify formation is socially and spatially constituted. Using a broadly intersectional social justice lens, understanding how queer/trans 'south asians' conceptualize and express their diasporic, sexualized, gendered, and racialized identities allows for a mapping of how these communities 'make themselves' in social landscapes. Informed by community-grounded, self-critical and anti-racist frameworks, this portfolio uses *Desh Pardesh*, a political arts festival that took place in Toronto at its peak in the 1990s, and introspection about the nature of the archive to explore queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing.

Ranging from theoretical, deeply person and creative, this portfolio is praxis in the complex (and messy) realm of community-oriented and community-focused critical work.

Foreword

Comprised of four parts, this portfolio is connected directly to my area of concentration (how a sense of community is constituted), and specifically to learning objectives 2.1, 3.2, and 4.2. as they relate to a study of queer and trans 'south asian' organizing in Toronto from the 1990s to present. This portfolio is intended to be interdisciplinary, bringing together approaches from gender studies, critical race studies as well as environmental studies. Theoretical, artistic and community-based knowledges will be included within the portfolio.

With the title of "Mapping Queer and Trans 'south asians,'" my Plan of Study details how I have sought to explore gender, sexuality, race, ethnicity, community, space, and the arts; this broad terrain includes a variety of subjects and disciplines and is best represented in a series of works.

My portfolio consists of four sections:

1. Possibilities in Archival Work, which focuses its attention on the process of thinking about, doing and engaging with archival work;

2. Remembering and Forgetting: Archiving Queer and Trans 'south asian' Organizing in Toronto, explores organizing efforts from 1990 onwards, with a focus on arts-based activisms;

3. what a mess acknowledges and theorizes the implications of documenting (and remembering) activist work;

4. *STORAGE* is a mixed-media art collection that responds to the themes of the portfolio; it features 3 small canvases and a comic.

Call for Guidance

O Universe – the circumstances of bliss and trauma have mingled, as designed, to make space for this work. To delve into the past has shifted my sense of time; these movements are ripples in a body of water with no name. I seek your guidance to let this work float past me, I own nothing. *Dhanavāda*

Acknowledgments

Firstly, I thank the Universe, for the opportunity to be here at this juncture, to do this work.

I acknowledge and appreciate this land - traditional territories of Mississaugas of New Credit First Nation, the Huron-Wendat First Nation, and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy. The ground, trees, water and air have nourished me as if I am family, though I am a guest. As I begin to understand my responsibilities (Treaty and otherwise), I am trying to do this and all work in a good way.

Supports within York University have made it possible for me to make sense of the tangles of theory, art and melancholy for a time I wish I could have been around for – my incredible supervisor Shobna Nijhawan (for so much support, patience, encouragement, and for making me think hard about the role of the vernacular in the diaspora), my brilliant, patient and understanding advisor Jinthana Haritaworn (for knowledge, experience, support and modelling).

My parents, who do not have the privilege of degrees or diplomas, for believing:
Dada for your faith;
Ma for your questions, for giving me space when I needed it, and for feeding me.

My loved ones:
Amardeep (for bearing witness to all parts of this process with me gently and lovingly, for support of every kind to make sure I could get through);
Berkha (for listening and talking, for driving me to the FES building too many times to count, for being here at the troublesome end, and for this transition);
Devan (for believing in desh, remembered);
mel (for encouraging the creative in everyday);
TK (for supporting any and all queer/trans 'south asian' organizing I've ever done, and for creating space on stages to remember);
and Udbi (simply, for brilliance).

And I end with an acknowledgement that I have been harmed – in and out of classrooms – and that harm has made me falter and then find my grounding once again.

It has been a messy time.

Table of Contents

Notes on Language

Queer and Trans are complex terms reflecting and representing a wide range of sexualities, gender identities and gender expressions. In this portfolio these two terms will be used as umbrella terms to reflect identities including queer, asexual, transgender, intersex, gay, genderqueer, lesbian, questioning, transsexual, etc. Using these umbrella terms brings with it limitations and risks.

I use **'south asian'** in lower case, and in quotation marks to highlight the contested and unstable nature of this term. This term has been used by institutions (such as Statistics Canada), but there is discomfort, disagreement and dissent with its usage by some parts of the communities it claims to envelope. The contestation is not simply for the arbitrary grouping of countries in a specific geographical area (which is never clear), but also for the ways in which 'south asian' (in its uncontested capitalization) often refers to people from India, and for the ways that the term prioritizes identities based on nation-states.

Introduction

You don't need to believe in the past - you just need to believe in the present
-Free Woman[1]

I have been struggling to write about a history of queer and trans 'south asian' organizing in Toronto for about a year now. There is no shortage of things to write about and there is no lack of interest. And yet, I have stayed silent, reserving my words somehow.

I began this work by diving into an exploration of *Desh Pardesh*, the highly successful political arts festival that took place in Toronto from 1990 to 2001. In 2007, the South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC) donated a large amount of *Desh Pardesh* materials to the Clara Scott Archives at York University, and I spent many days in the archives, pouring over minutes, submissions from artists and festival programs. I also visited the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, self-described as "the largest independent LGBTQ archives in the world"[2] and found media coverage from both the heyday and the sudden demise of *Desh Pardesh*.

I can rattle off the things that I have learned about *Desh Pardesh:*

- Desh Pardesh was not the original name of the event (it was Khalla)

- Gayatri Spivak was invited to speak in 1991 (and her schedule did not permit it)

- Ian Iqbal Rashid played an integral role in curatorial work, even when based in the UK

- Fax paper does not deteriorate as fast as the ink wears away

---

[1] Personal communication
[2] CLGA website: www.clga.ca

- Pardesh is alternately spelled Pradesh over the years

- The first use of email for organizing occurred in February 1997

- Under 20 people showed up to the meeting to discuss 'saving' *Desh Pardesh* in 2000

As I explored the archival materials, much else emerged - spaces in Toronto that hosted or supported *Desh Pardesh* events but no longer exist; collectives and collaborations I had never known about, by people I consider elders in the community; framings and narratives that would find a home in contemporary organizing. I explored an incredible amount of material. And yet, I could not write about it. In fact, I could barely speak about it.

Perhaps it was too difficult to write about the past when I have been trying to reconcile my own relationship to time - past, present and future. It is likely that I also was nervous about writing specifically about *Desh Pardesh* because of what it means and represents to me - a time in Toronto I wish I had been able to access, a gathering of people that was so powerful people still speak of it, an organization that seemed to have been birthed swiftly (and then passed just as quickly). For a queer woman of colour who is surviving a series of traumas, it is a strange thing to know a history that could potentially be claimed as "ours" or "mine" and it is even stranger to dream.

This portfolio is a dream, musing, meditation and an offering.

Possibilities in Archival Work

Geordi: Captain, I think this is gonna work, but it's gonna take some time.
Picard: Well, Mr. LaForge, it seems that time is something that we have plenty of.
Star Trek: The Next Generation[3]

Remember, I will still be here
As long as you hold me, in your memory
Remember, when your dreams have ended
Time can be transcended
Just remember me
Josh Groban, "Remember"[4]

Archives are ambiguous creatures, shape-shifters that capture the interest and imagination of activists, scholars of many disciplines, zine-makers, librarians and museum-goers. To answer the seemingly-simple question of "what is the archive?" there are two broad responses: firstly, a difficulty or complication; secondly, a specific literal definition. Across disciplines, scholars have also attempted to define and theorize the archive, resulting in a heterogeneous body of work 'on' the archives, which I will explore in this essay.

I have a deep interest in the temporal, honed by traumatic formative years where I spent much time imagining a different and better future, and in my adult life, re-calling previous experiences, relationships and learnings trying to reconcile triggers and patterns.[5] This intrigue with the temporal has, invariably, resulted in an attraction towards the archives. If I were to 'pin down' my fascination with the archives into a singular narrative, it would be that the archive beckons me with possibilities to return

---

[3] Star Trek: The Next Generation, "Timescapes," 6:25, June 14, 1993. (from memory)
[4] *Troy: Soundtrack*, 2004
[5] I am using these two concepts (taken from trauma-informed care) broadly

and re-turn to it. As a queer woman of colour with connections to 'south asia,'[6] my academic experiences, family relationships and community activisms have focused attention simultaneously to the past and future, with regularity.

In this paper, I will feel and chart my way through the archive, my first destination being various conceptualizations or framings of archive, as well as the making of the archive itself. Next, I will approach two turns and consider them both – the historic turn that Ann Laura Stoler discusses in the context of post-colonial studies' archival work, and the more recent archival turn of queer and, to a lesser extent, trans studies. For the latter, I will also pause to 'visit' community queer and trans archives. Following this, I will attempt to unpack concepts related to memory, including the active and unconscious acts of remembering and forgetting, deploying these terms not as binary, but as complimentary and overlapping (messy) concepts inherent to critical discussions about archives. Intimacies, whether making public that which is private, or the role of gossip, will be explored next, with a hope of connecting to the affective, encouraged by queer theorists including José Esteban Mũnoz and Ann Cvetvokich. I will move forward with a reflection on looking at a future that is both coming and being made. In the conclusion, I will posit a sharp third turn, suggesting new pragmatics for queer diasporic archival work that seeks to dislodge itself from complicity in settler colonialism.

This essay is both academic and personal travel, traversing across disciplines, methodologies and epistemologies, institutions, places and spaces. This journey is grounded in my own experience of engagement with institutional and community-based

---

[6] I use this term in lower case and within quotation marks as part of a broader practice to destabilize certain identities assumed to have a stable relationship to nation-states. In the Canadian context, 'south asian' is a state-defined category used, for example, in the Census. This artificial grouping of otherwise disparate communities is troubling, and the grammatical intervention I attempt is to trouble this further.

archives in Toronto, the Clara Scott Archives at York University and the Canadian

Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) respectively, while reviewing materials about the

Desh Pardesh festival (1990-2001). As this journey reveals itself to me, I navigate the

mess of my study: posters from artistic events I have organized, textbooks, journal

articles, notepads and calendars; also my own affective mappings upon these items. An

archive of a student, 'organizer,' former worker and survivor.

Grounded in the Archive

I am going to consider Jacques Derrida's *Archive Fever* at the onset – this is not

to suggest its preeminence in any way, but instead to reflect a common thread amongst

texts exploring the archives. Marlene Manoff found this in 2004, and I have found it still

true one decade later in 2015.[7] Derrida uses an etymological approach, exploring the

origins of the term, and brings forward two Greek words – *arkhē* and *arkheion*. These

words signify, according to Derrida, origin, physicality of space, guardian(s). Referring

back to these 'origin' terms, Derrida points to the physicality of the archive, as well as

authority imbibed within it. For Derrida, the fever is a kind of desire for nostalgia, to

recall or return to a particular understanding of home;[8] this desire is problematic and

only facilitated by a drive for destruction. The possibilities of the future are of interest to

Derrida, and he understands that the archive functions like a token of the future.[9]

It should be noted that Derrida's articulations of archives are focused for the most

part on institutional archives. His exploration of Sigmund Freud's materials includes

---

[7] Manoff, "Theories of the Archive from Across the Discipline," page 11

[8] It is interesting to consider the multiple meanings of the "homesickness" that Derrida describes in *Archive Fever*, page 91.

[9] *Archive Fever*, page 18.

those items that perhaps were not traditionally included in archival collections, and he

suggests that with the advent of technology, the very nature of the archive can shift.

Texts across disciplines indicate a difficulty in defining the archive,[10] some stating its

multiple possibilities, and yet others its paradoxes.[11] Manoff finds this difficulty is due to

two forces at play: a conflation of institutions into one category or host (libraries,

museums and archives), and an inflation of archives' inclusions.[12] This conflation refers

to where (place) and how (space) materials are kept. Indeed, the concepts of archive,

history and memorialization[13] co-mingle in these otherwise disparate spaces. Inflation

refers to the increased breadth of materials in the archives, such as oral histories,

popular materials, etc.[14]

Power and the Archives

Archives are imbibed with power – from their physicality, form, funding, content,

caretakers, processes as well as the discourses that they (re)create. Derrida suggests a

relationship between access to the archive and democratization.[15] Terry Cook and Joan

M. Schwartz state that "archival buildings, often seen as neutral embodiments of …

scientific and professional ideals, are actually heavily laden with expressed desires and

values."[16] Institutional archives, Angela L. DiVeglia shares, "can be construed as

---

[10] See for example Manoff
[11] Voss and Werner, "Towards a Poetics of the Archive: Introduction" *Studies in the Literary Imagination,* page i
[12] Manoff, page 2
[13] By memorialization, I mean formalized (and often performative) ways of remembering. These include plaques, institutional or community statements or events, or archival interventions.
[14] Anjali Arondekar identifies these as ways that the colonial archive in particular has been expanded – she finds that despite this inclusion, the reliance on that which can be found pre-supposes a specific form of knowledge production.
[15] *Archive Fever*, Page 11
[16] Cook, Terry, and Joan M. Schwartz. "Archives, records, and power: from (postmodern) theory to (archival) performance." *Archival Science* 2, no. 3-4 (2002), page 180

instruments of power inasmuch as they are frequently associated with universities or state/federal governments."[17] DiVeglia goes on to point to the hierarchies at play in the physical spaces of archives, such as the power differentials between staff and visitor (articulated by boundaries or desks, for example), as well as the surveillance within archival spaces.

Paul J. Voss and Mara L. Werner describe a series of paradoxical roles of archives: "preserves and reserves, protects and patrols, regulates and represses."[18] One example of the powered and ideologically-informed practices of archives are the categorizations within cataloguing. Drabinski states that "classification and controlled vocabularies are always sites of struggle."[19] Categorization and cataloguing, within the broader library sciences context, has been discussed by a number of theorists who point to ways in which categories create and often perpetuate discourses or narratives about marginalized communities. The headings in the catalogue, as DiVigelia shares, establish and confirm normative understandings of sexuality and gender, that impact how and why resources are used.[20]

In their use of queer theory to examine archival practices and archivists, Cook and Schwartz suggest that from the inside, "archival records are still seen, ideally, to reflect an 'original order' in order to reflect some better reality or 'truth' about the records' creator."[21] This reflection is, however, distinct from the actual practice of

---

[17] In *Make Your Own history: Documenting Feminist & Queer Activism in the 21st Century*, Lyz Bly and Kelly Wooten, eds. 2012, Page 70

[18] "Towards a Poetics of the arhive: Introduction," page i

[19] Drabinski, Emily. "Queering the catalog: Queer theory and the politics of correction." *The Library* 83, no. 2 (2013), page 103

[20] In *Make Your Own history: Documenting Feminist & Queer Activism in the 21st Century*, Lyz Bly and Kelly Wooten, eds. 2012, Page 71.

[21] Cook, Terry, and Joan M. Schwartz. "Archives, records, and power: from (postmodern) theory to (archival) performance." *Archival Science* 2, no. 3-4 (2002), page 174.

gathering materials, establishing collections and cataloguing archival materials. With no irony, Manoff states that the inclusion of materials in archives can be for a wide range of reasons including "sheer luck."[22] In the case of colonial archives, historians (including those who are attuned to the role of documentation in empire building) often see the archives "as enclosed, static, and discreet."[23] For some feminist and queer archives, the inclusion, collection or donation of materials to specific institutional archives can be mediated by personal relationships between archivists and donors – this is for example, the case with the Riot Grrrl Collection at Fales Library and Special Collection in 1992.[24]

In response to issues of power and ideology at play in the archival world, library and archive institutions have responded with strategies. Cook and Schwartz note that the "allegedly value-free tools" such as standardized templates, the establishment of best practices actually "impose their own rational, systematic way of seeing on a world of record keeping and records creators that is, inherently chaotic."[25]

While there is some acknowledgement about the inherent chaos (or mess, as I like to describe it) of the archive, as well as archival processes and practices, there still remains rigidity within the institutional structures. Access to archives (including to materials donated by marginalized communities) continues to enforce a standard of what kind of individual *should* and *would* attempt to retrieve, review or analyze archival materials.

---

[22] "Theories of the Archive from Across the Discipline," page 14.
[23] Page 113.
[24] Kate Eichhorn „Archiving the Moment: The Riot Grrrl Collection at Fales Library and Special Collections" in *Make Your Own history: Documenting Feminist & Queer Activism in the 21st Century*, Lyz Bly and Kelly Wooten, eds. 2012, 22-37.
[25] Cook, Terry, and Joan M. Schwartz. "Archives, records, and power: from (postmodern) theory to (archival) performance." *Archival Science* 2, no. 3-4 (2002), page 176.

Both my planning, and the actual visits to the Clara Scott Archives to review *Desh Pardesh* materials, reflect a specific institutional order. This institutional order relies on notions of a particular kind of 'researcher' and a particular kind of research (and daily) practice. The archive is open on weekdays from 10:00 am to 4:30 pm and requires registration in order to access materials. With my chronic health struggles (including insomnia), I often planned to visit the archives, but was unable to make it for the limited opening hours. My experiences of accessing materials, being surveilled[26] and being regulated depended on who I was interacting with. Some senior staff were very helpful and encouraging; another asked for a formal letter of request for access to the archive from a supervisor as well as a community-based group (whose former Executive Director had donated the materials in 2007). Staff also expressed a range of supports – some deferred to a senior staff member for all questions, and others yet were more flexible, insisting that as long as I filled out as much information as possible on appropriate forms, my work would be fine. The nervousness I felt in approaching and visiting the archive speaks to broader institutional arrangements (or structures) that work to restrict access(ibility) through narrow definitions of inclusion.

This section has focused primarily on institutional archives, with an explicit understanding that community-based archives often have a significantly different relationship to the role of archival research and to the state. The Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, that I visited in my research about *Desh Pardesh*, is the largest independent LGBTQ+ archive in the world[27] and recently celebrated its 50th

---

[26] By this I mean monitored - I am using this term purposefully to point to the ways in which I was watched in the space.

[27] CLGA website

anniversary. Before an engagement with community-based archives, I speak to turns discussed next: a post-colonial turn and a queer and trans turn.

Turning to the Post-Colonial Archive

I am hoping to employ two 'turns' as a way of approaching the archive further. The first relates to a post-colonial study of the archive; the second speaks to queer and trans responses and interventions. These turns, separated by time and discipline, when brought together provide a useful framework for exploring contemporary queer diasporic archives.

Taking two turns is not about a binary, about getting lost or about going forwards and backwards. It is two rides on the TTC[28] – one to the CLGA, and one to the Clara Scott Archives. It is two ideas leaving their traces on two sides of a piece of paper in a single notebook purchased from the York University bookstore.

Ann Laura Stoler points to a historic turn in various social sciences that lead scholars to visit and then revisit the archives. Her own work is positioned within post-colonial studies, and her contributions to the field have been significant. For Stoler, the practice of engaging with colonial archives must include not just this practice of excavation (which she understands as part of a practice of 'reading against the grain'), but also 'reading along the grain' which ensures that the "power in the production of the archive itself" is not bypassed.[29] Post-colonial scholars have employed a critical analysis, utilizing the archives as a way of exploring the empire. Colonial archives have

---

[28] Toronto Transit Commission.
[29] Stole, "Colonial archives," page 101

been explored as sources and sites of knowledge production. Manoff describes the role

of documentation, as an action in the establishment of power in empire-building. For

some post-colonial scholars, the focus on individuals subjected by colonial power has

meant that they engage in excavation – seeking out the marginalized voice within the

colonial archives.

Antoinette Burton, in reflections on her own post-colonial archival work, which is

feminist in nature, posits that the archives she consulted acted as a "historiographical

opportunity in and for the present"[30] shifting the temporal focus. Tony Ballantyne

describes the imperative role of archives within a web of colonial institutions that make

up empire.[31] This perspective, pointing to the limitations of the nation-state as the scope

or scale for which to analyze colonial histories, suggests that the role of the archive in

the development and maintenance of the archive is broader than the nation-state. Other

theorists, including Achille Mbembe examine the archive (in particular the institutional

archive) as a tool that works in conjunction with nation-building and national

imaginaries.[32]

Turning to the Queer and Trans Archive

Along with the historic turn that leads us to post-colonial scholars, I am making

my way through the archival turn[33] in queer and trans studies. Working on histories from

below[34] for queer and trans studies has included amplifying marginalized voices and

---

[30] Page 5

[31] Page 113

[32] "The Power of the Archive and its Limits" in *Refiguring the Archive*, Carolyn Hamilton et al, Eds, 2002, 19- 27

[33] I am taking this from a recent issue of Radical History Review.

[34] Sabyasachi Bhattacharya's exploration of this concept suggests that histories from below can broaden the scope and break nationalist paradigms, in "History from Below" *Social Scientist*, 11(4), 1983; The South African people's

finding queer and trans presence (whether through absences or otherwise). This work

forms a political purpose of the production of a queer and trans sense of history. As a

critical response to this production, Anjali Arondekar points to how this extractive work

in the case of sexuality in the colonial archive ('seeking to find') maintains the archive as

the primary source of knowledge about colonial pasts.[35]

The archival turn, while documented recently, can find its traces in the 1970s,

during a particularly visible time for queer and trans communities in North America.

While I will be discussing the generation of collections and community-based archives, it

is important to remember our limits – as Mũnoz states, the systems of homophobia and

transphobia are organized in a way to fragment queer and trans archives.[36] There are

serious gaps in the bodies of work that comprise queer and trans archives – especially

within institutional settings, where queer and trans communities are often under-

represented in terms of donors, staff, researchers, or volunteers.

Since the 1970s, there has been significant work to find traces of queer and, less

frequently, trans presence in already-existing archives, as well as momentum to create

archives, whether independent or located in institutions. Aimee Brown details the

impetus for the creation of queer and trans archives:

> to come out of the closet as a culture, a desire to know their own history, to
> combat the active destruction of their history, to own and control their own
> history, to provide material for the creation of publications both celebration and

---

history movement in the 1970s and 1980s is another example described by Mohamed Seedat in "Oral History as an Enactment of Critical Community Psychology" *Journal of Community Psychology*, 43(1), 2015, 22-35. More locally, Simon Black's "A People's History for the Yonge Street Rebellion" from 2015 position 'a people's history' in opposition to an 'official' one.

[35] "Without a Trace: Sexuality and the Colonial Archive" *Journal of the History of Sexuality*, 14(1/2), 2005, 10-27.
[36] Page 7

telling the truth about their lives, and to provide safe places to read and study LGBTQ materials.[37]

In the establishment of community-based archives, queer and trans organizers challenged the notion that only certain people (professional archivists, historians or libraries) could participate in documenting histories.[38] In Toronto, the CLGA (originally named the Canadian Gay Liberation Movement Archives) was established in 1973 by a collective of members from *The Body Politic* (one of the first queer or trans publications in Canada). In the late 1970s, the Provincial Archives of Ontario approached the CLGA to merge the collection into their own; their offer was, however, refused. This rejection was likely grounded in the CLGA's understanding of their archival work as political work.[39] This uneasy relationship with institutions is not uncommon amongst queer and trans community-based archives. With limitations in core funding, many community-based archives (queer and trans, or otherwise) must contend with the possibility that being absorbed into an institution may ensure their sustainability.

My time at the CLGA was remarkably productive (in terms of finding useful materials related to *Desh Pardesh*) and a little heart-warming. Nestled in what looks and feels like a home in Church-Wellesley Village, I felt welcomed into the space by staff. Unlike at the Clara Scott Archives, I was not alone, nor was I watched as I reviewed media articles and promotional materials. It was easy and inexpensive to make copies of the articles. I was encouraged to take my time, sat at a shared table and felt comfortable to share the feeling of sorrow I was experiencing when reading about the demise of *Desh Pardesh*. I did have to identify myself, register and pay a small fee to

---

[37] Page 124.

[38] DiVeglia, page 73.

[39] The CLGA identifies itself as "a trusted guardian of LGBTQ+ histories" on its website – www.clga.ca/about-us

access resources– regulations still exist. I noted that I was the only visibly racialized person in the building, amongst a few staff members and the other two visitors.

DiVeglia identifies a number of elements, or key concerns that queer and trans community-based archives often consider: visibility, self-determination, accessibility, privacy, accountability and trust. For institutional archives engaging with queer and trans communities or queer and trans archival materials, DiVeglia suggests that these elements could be useful considerations. For some areas, such as accessibility, it is unlikely that institutional archives can reimagine their policies of access to materials; In terms of accountability and trust, there are potential ways forward when there is concerted effort to connect with communities whose histories are collected, and a willingness to have open dialogue.

There are both benefits and risks to community-based queer and trans archives partnering or merging with institutional archives. Polly Thistelewaite warns that these kinds of mergers are informed by an assimilationist mindset.[40] In the example of the Riot Grrrl Collection at Fales Library, access is framed singularly in terms of research. Lisa Darms, the Senior Archivist (who also has personal connections to Johanna Fateman and Kathleen Hanna, who donated significant materials), described access in this way:

> "Scholarly is something we interpret broadly, because many of our researchers are artists [but] I have made sure that the donations have happened with an understanding the materials will be accessed for scholarly projects. This has been the motivation for the donors so far – a recognition that the materials will support research. They haven't donated their materials to make them more accessible to fans."[41]

---

[40] As quoted in Snapp-Cook, page 152.
[41] As quoted in Kate Eichhorn, page 31

This commentary about the purpose of visits to the Riot Grrrl Collection came partly in response to excitement in the broader feminist and queer community about the materials and perhaps a public articulation of wanting to visit. More broadly, the relationship between art (especially community art) and academia is complicated, fraught with tensions of credibility, authenticity, inclusion and value. The Riot Grrrl Collection's inclusion in an institutional archive seeks to resolve a tension about community-based knowledge and cultural production (specifically zines), but questions about art and the academy remain.

In addition to the inclusion of queer and trans materials or collections in institutional archives and the establishment of community-based queer and trans archives, there has been significant theoretical attention paid to the archives by queer and trans studies. These new ways of queering the archives take many forms and articulations. Through the next sections, I will identify them as markers in the journeys of trace, memory, forgetting, intimacies and futures.

Traces

As I tread through the archives, slipping deeper into its messy parts, I am confronted with hints, signposts and fragments – traces of queer diasporic life. It is Mũnoz's conceptualization of "ephemera" that I find compelling here – "evidence of what has transpired, but not the thing itself."[42] In the complex archives of communities such as those I am connected to, the ephemeral is especially important. Given my interest in cultural production and artistic activisms, including *Desh Pardesh*, the traces of queer and trans diasporic creators/creations are signs of significant insights.

[42] Page 10

Gayatri Gopinath, in *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*, points to role and importance of traces in understanding the archive she seeks to explore. Gopinath states "because queer diasporic lives and communities often leave traces that resist textualization, they allow us to rethink what constitutes a viable archive of South Asian diasporic cultural production in the first place."[43]

As shown here, the relationship between traces and various articulations of archives can be seen in multiple ways. This includes in queer and trans archival interventions and in post-colonial work that shifts its focus to the intimate and the domestic. Finally, this is visible in new ways of theorizing the archive through a complex relationship to time.

Memory

Memory and forgetting are operationalized as binaries in much work 'on' the archive. However, I intend to unravel part of the messiness of these concepts here, understanding them as necessary co-conspirators in critical archival work. I return first to Derrida, whose articulation of archive fever I understand as a longing for origin, a desire to build or sustain a memory. Paul J. Voss and Mara L. Werner describe a 'poetics of the archive,' that is "poetics of re-collection, of re-membering, in which all proofs are provisional and subject to re-vision."[44] For DiVeglia, "the development of historical memory and shared memory" for marginalized communities is a key role for community-based archives.

---

[43] Page 21. This can means tracing how power structures that influence queer 'south asian' diasporic lives (including cultural production) are heteronormative, for example.
[44] Page ii

Memory itself, however, must be unpacked - in particular the nature of authenticity of memories. In the context of trauma, memory plays a slippery role. As Urvashi Butalia describes in the context of Partition in 'south asia,' the affective (what she deems 'underside') aspects of trauma are often left out of history altogether.[45] Butalia points out that the seeking 'truths' in the case of traumas (such as displacement) can in fact be violent themselves, given their serious implications.[46] The 1990s brought to public attention the so-called phenomenon of 'false memory syndrome.'[47] Advancements in trauma care (including supporting those with post-traumatic stress disorder) highlight the fact that some memories can be buried in our brains, and then easily triggered by external stimuli. In the case of archives of communities who have experienced trauma, how do we reconcile questions of memory? Whose memories? Remembered in what way? How often?

Katherine McKittrick's examination of the Green Hill slave auction block begins with a note about authenticity – as the documentation accompanying the picture indicates that story of the auction block has not been verified. McKittrick suggests that "what we imagine, see, believe, disbelieve, and wonder upon encountering this auction block is what produces its meaning."[48] This act creates not just meaning, but also memory.

---

[45] Page 275
[46] Page 280.
[47] I recall this debate being in popular media when I was growing up. In my twenties when I accessed counselling supports to deal with a sexual assault (which occurred in my teens), I was recommended *The Courage to Heal: A Guide for Women Survivors of Child Sexual Abuse* by Ellen Bass and Laura Davis and realized that the book had been implicated in the 'false memory syndrome' debate. I will note here that in addition to surviving a sexual assault in my teenager, I am a survivor of childhood sexual abuse (which I do not remember, but was told about by the person who abused me).
[48] Page 67

For some people, at some times, forgetting is an act of survival, to ensure safety. Whether that be working to banish memories of harm or trauma on an individual level, or trans communities of colour oscillating between remembrance and forgetting about the violence enacted by a hateful public and state.

In archives, structures and processes encourage a particular kind of forgetting, unlike the intentional forgetting detailed above, but sometimes focused similarly on safety. Some files in archives may be 'unavailable' for a specified period of time (usually until those who are named in the file have passed on).[49] In the case of *Desh Pardesh* materials at the Clara Scott Archives, human resources and financial files were unavailable for public view – something I was reminded of on multiple occasions (despite not requesting that information).[50]

The practice of waiting for an appropriate period of time before making documents available is a practice utilized most frequently by the state. At seemingly-regular intervals, various sets of materials are 'declassified' by governments to the broader public. Sometimes they are released in an altered format – some areas covered up – this absence/presence highlights the messiness of memory and forgetting as co-conspirators in archival work.

In the case of marginalized community archives, forgetting and violence can be intertwined. Gopinath finds that the queer diasporic archive "documents how diasporic

---

[49] The working assumption is that waiting a pre-specified period of time reduces the risks to those who are named (or implied) by the archival materials. The process for determining the length of time may be based on best practices, the archivist's own practice, or by request of the donors. This is an instance where the institutional archive appears to be concerned about harm and accountability – but since archival materials donated may include reference to other individuals or activities, it could be likely that archive (and the institution that houses it, perhaps) is using a risk management approach to avoid litigation.

[50] These materials were listed as unavailable for 30 years, as per the series description.

and national subjectivities are produced through the deliberate forgetting and violent expulsion."[51]

It is a blood red, glistening thread that runs through my struggles in and with the archives, that my fingers return to time and time again. This essay began with a description of archives as 'creatures' intentionally, to point to life within the archives, or that the lives present (explicitly or in traces). Encouraged by Mel Y. Chen's exploration of the animate and inanimate, I find the signs of life in the inanimate intimacy with paper, folders, CDs and photographs. Not just life, but also death is in the archive; in fact, all of the states between life and death as well. Carolyn Steedman, in her critique of Derrida's *Archive Fever* repositions and re-articulates fever as something more sinister. Steedman points to disease (and risk of death) as a practical reality for those engaged in literal archival work – given the health risks of engaging with dusty rooms, materials bound with animal skins, and the inhalation of chemicals utilized in printing and bookbinding and conservation.[52] This articulation of space, theory and practice aligns with Chen's conceptualization of public (and even private) spaces that must be navigated given the presence of chronic health conditions.

Intimacies

The shifting boundaries between public and private spaces often play a key role in critical work theorizing the archives. The intimacy of the home becomes a site of analysis for both post-colonial and queer studies. Burton suggests that the intimate texts

---

[51] Page 21
[52] Cited in Manoff, page 17-18

of women's memories of home "should be read *both* as archival sites *and* as history-in-the-making."[53] Rebecca Taves Sheffield's Bedside Table Archives also focuses on the home, but hones in on the bedside tables of lesbian and queer-identified women in the Toronto area, in an effort to understand domestic cultures of these women.[54]

Ann Cvetkovich's contribution to discussions of intimacy can be found in her articulation that queer and, to a lesser extent, trans archives, "propose that affects – associated with nostalgia, personal memory, fantasy, and trauma – make a document significant."[55] Of course, as discussed earlier, the affective does not necessarily mean leaving something visible – the ephemeral returns, the trace returns and the possibilities of queer and trans archives are raised again.

As an articulation of culturally-based intimacy, Kwame Holmes theorizes gossip as "an archive of experience even as it resists recognition and institutionalization."[56] The nature of discussions about and within queer Black communities in Washington, DC (informal, suggestive, gossip), Holmes argues, played a key role in expressing political self-representation, in the face of dominant discourses of sexuality. In my own work within queer and trans 'south asian' communities, I too have faced gossip as a practical concern, and find Holmes' exploration particularly useful. My initial discussions with community elders about *Desh Pardesh*, for example, were fraught with gossip about the individuals who had been involved and the relationships that were no longer functional. Later yet, when considering what areas to focus on in the broad range of queer and trans 'south asian' community activism in Toronto, the risks of managing gossip were

---

[53] Dweling in the archive, page 25, emphasis in original.
[54] "The Bedside Table Archives: Archive Intervention and Lesbian Intimate Domestic Culture" *Radial History Review*, 120, 2014, 108-120
[55] Page 243
[56] Page 56

too high and scope of work so broad, I opted out of interviews or focus groups.[57]

Deciding to focus on the archives, however, has not eliminated the need for careful

attention to the concept of gossip – as it finds its way into traces within the broad

archive of queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing I have consulted.

There are possibilities for intimacy within the space and place of queer and trans

community archives – the Lesbian Herstory Archives, located in New York City, are

situated within a home, without the rigid categorization of institutional archives. There

are possibilities of direct, visceral engagement (you can touch so much) with archival

materials.

Futures

The multiple timescapes[58] of archives are overlapping, like so many pieces of

paper in a busy student's study or items of clothing at the end of a day in a shop.

Derrida's assertion that the archives play a role not just for today, but also for the future,

helps to ground a conversation about futures. Mũnoz states that queer is not here yet,

and points to the need for queer studies (and queer activists) to shift away from the past

and the present, and instead to focus on a future that has not yet arrived.[59] For Alexis

Pauline Gumbs, Black feminist work is eternal, where archiving is expanded to "creating

a record through letters to some of the living and deceased Black feminist activists."[60]

---

[57] In some ways, this could be a way that I am perpetuating silences. However, my decision to focus on archival work is intentionally incomplete. In addition, it should be noted that another history project focused on *Desh Pardesh* is being coordinated by the South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC), and involves interviews in addition to archival work.
[58] Reference to an episode of Star Trek: The Next Generation, where some members of the crew experience anomalies of time. The quote at the top of this paper is from episode dialogue.
[59] See Mũnoz.
[60] Page 59-60

Both Mũnoz and Gumbs point to new formulations and new ways of imagining the archives. For contemporary queer diasporic archives, these formulations provide a source of excitement and encouragement. How do we theorize cultural production focused on a future that has yet to come?

The proliferation of web-based resources and online tools has significantly shifted the terrain of the archives – new locations, new processes for collection, new ways of disseminating and sharing, new articulations of archival homes. Locally in Toronto, there are three recent (and prominent) web archives that are in the making, all focused on queer and trans communities. Marvellous Grounds describes itself as

> "a book, a web archive and a research project that seeks to document and create space to vision the ways that QTBIPOC (queer and trans Black, Indigenous and people of colour) create communities, innovate projects and foster connections within Toronto/Three Fires Territories and beyond."[61]

The South Asian Visual Arts Centre (SAVAC)'s *Not a Place on a Map: The Desh Pardesh Project* features an oral history project, and "a 'living archive'; a webspace where archival materials will be hosted digitally, so that the voices of the people who upheld this festival and arts organization can come to life."[62] A colour deep (ACD) is a new online community for queer and trans 'south asians,' with the organizing collective located in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA).[63] While not a traditional archival space, ACD described itself (at its recent launch in Toronto)[64] as wanting to become a source or host

---

[61] Marvellous Grounds Facebook page https://www.facebook.com/Marvellous-Grounds-Queer-of-colour-spaces-in-Toronto-390673421057379/

[62] SAVAC http://savac.net/not-a-place-on-a-map-the-desh-pardesh-project/

[63] Traditional territory of the Mississaugas of New Credit First nation, the Huron-Wendat First Nation and the Haudenosaunee Confederacy, as describe on their website: www.acolourdeep.ca/about

[64] A Colour Deep Launch Event, November 5, 2015, SKETCH Working Arts in Toronto.

for resources, networking, events, creativity and community for queer and trans 'south asian' communities broadly.

The presence of these web-based archival projects point to a new medium for engaging with histories; there are however some distinctions – Marvellous Grounds is organized by a collective of queer and trans community members; ACD by a small collective of queer and trans 'south asian' community members, while *Not a Place on a Map* is coordinated by a staff member at a funded arts organization with roots in the *Desh Pardesh* festival. These differences will likely mean differences in the articulation of the web-based archive, and will be useful resources for queer and trans community members and archivists alike.

The shapeshifting nature of archives means that the particular kind of tracing I have embarked on here, will be required again – even more than once. With two initial turns to ground me, I have been led through post-colonial studies, as well as queer and trans studies. They coalesce for my careful exploration of queer diasporic archives, and yet there are still gaps. The context of contemporary archives (in particular queer and trans, and more specifically so, queer and trans of colour) in terms of its location is missing. In North America, the context of settler colonialism as a foundational system has often been ignored, erased or avoided. While traces of Indigenous peoples can be found within the content of some archival materials focused on queer diasporas,[65] an

---

[65] In my own work on *Desh Pardesh*, festival materials included solidarity statements with Indigenous peoples of Canada; the description of Marvellous Grounds includes mention of traditional territory, and a focused attention to Indigenous communities and organizing; ACD mentions traditional territories as well (using a slightly different articulation from Marvellous Grounds) and in my personal communication, the collective members indicate wanting to create blog posts and discussions specifically about ways in which 'south asians' participate in settler colonialism, and the ways in which they are/can demonstrate solidarity with Indigenous peoples.

examination of the archives themselves that destabilizes settler colonial understandings of land, history, documentation and community, is almost non-existent.

The Third Turn

As Jodi Byrd states in *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*

"The breakaway settler colonialism that produced the global North … have created internally contradictory quagmires where human rights, equal rights, and recognitions are predicated on the very systems that propagate and maintain the dispossession of indigenous peoples for the common good of the world."[66]

The kind of queer diasporic archive I hope for can only exist through a third turn, and this one, is sharp. This turn, away from settler colonialism, requires a re-thinking of the archive in dramatic ways. I articulate this re-thinking in several ways.

First, in re-establishing the basis for discussion about exclusion and representation from critiques of state-based racisms that begin with anti-immigrant sentiment, and to a focused attention on settler colonialism. So, in archival work that considers historical processes as context, systems of racism must include colonization *within* Canada. Establishing this basis allows for a deeper articulation of how diasporic communities' experiences of state-based oppression in particular, are in fact, connected to a systems established well before immigration and settlement. Further, explorations of settlement experiences can be enriched by understanding settlement not simply as difficult or traumatic for those migrating, but also for those 'already here.'

Secondly, with an explicit articulation of land, territory and nation, in archival work – this ranges from the very practical knowledge of territory that is host to the archives, to the theoretical re-mapping of traditional territory over space-based analysis. As some

---

[66] Page xix

archival work uses space and land as frames of analysis, this third turn encourages a reimagining. Practically speaking, this can include researchers learning about, acknowledging and including in their research the territories their work focuses or takes place on; if research has any cartographical components, they provide an opportunity to make visible the contours of Indigenous territories alongside the specific mapping of the projects.

Thirdly, to resist reducing the nation to the nation-state for articulations of diaspora[67] and similarly to be cognizant of issues of cultural appropriation that often disappear into conceptualizations of cosmopolitanism. For Indigenous communities, the concept of nationhood is distinct and unique, and can be acknowledged in diasporic work. As Andrea Smith clearly articulates, the kind of cosmopolitanism that Gayatri Gopinath discusses, for example, does leave unquestioned (and unchecked) forms of cultural appropriation amongst diasporic 'south asians.'[68]

Fourth, to destabilize the nature of data and archives explicitly, recognizing that institutions with the mandate of collecting histories, artifacts and data have, and still do, play a role in ongoing settler colonialism (while also resisting this role). So, considering ways in which a decolonizing practice can be incorporated into archival work – the possibilities for this work are quite broad, but must prioritize Indigenous peoples, their access to community and cultural resources, and practices of respect and responsibility.

---

[67] For a particularly compelling discussion of this, see Andrea Smith's commentary about Gayatri Gopinath's work in her text "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism" *GLQ*, Vol 16, No 1-2, 2010.

[68] Smith points out Gopinath's exploration of UK-based musician Apache Indian. For a more local example of appropriation of Black cultures, scholar Amrita Kauldher's (unpublished) work in 2014 on Punjabi hip hop artists also relied on cosmopolitan understanding of culture. Kauldher's presentation on a version of this work can be found online: https://prezi.com/15czat3s3if4/situating-sikh-diasporic-dubs/

Finally, to pay close attention to the ways that archival practices many rely on, in fact displace Indigenous peoples and Indigenous experiences. These displacements include institutional practices and policies (including cataloguing, categorizing, access, valuing of specific types of knowledge production, and for older institutions their procurement of archival materials historically) as well as disengagement with local Indigenous communities, whose valuable perspectives on local histories are often overlooked.

After these turns, these travels, I have come to rest in possibility.

A queer diasporic archive is a possibility, in the spaces between disciplines, in the crevices where only traces can be found, in the mess created by this widening, and in my beating heart.

Rememberings and Forgetting Papers: Archiving Queer and Trans 'south asian' Organizing in Toronto

...the conventional wisdom has given an account of capitalism without the working class, an account of imperialism without Blacks, and an account of the division of labor without women. What kind of history is that?
Stuart Hall"[69]

History is revised and resubmitted by the winners
Shit Academics Say[70]

To describe activism or resistance as new is a strategy of erasure, contends Cindy Holmes in "Violence, Colonialism, and Space: Towards a Decolonizing Dialogue."[71] This surfacing of a tendency in dominant or mainstream cultures to 'forget' the community organizing efforts of marginalized peoples points to the ways in which activisms are challenged. In the case of queer and trans 'south asian' communities in Toronto, there is a complex contradiction: some awareness that there is 'a history'[72] and yet an ever-surprised response[73] when public mention of sexuality and gender are raised within the broader 'south asian' community. What separate participants in the former from the latter are time, age, location and proximity. There have been gaps in both public discourses[74] as well as broader dialogues about the relationships between past activisms, the present and future to come. This paper intends to trace a "light and jagged line"[75] across a deep milieu of community organizing in Toronto from the late

---

[69] "Marxism and Culture" *Radical History Review,* page 9
[70] Facebook group. Posted online November 26, 2015
[71] Cindy Holmes (along with Sarah Hunt and Amy Piedalue) "Violence, Colonialism, and Space: Towards a Decolonizing Dialogue" ACME, 2014, 14(2), 562
[72] I am putting this word in quotes purposefully – to do so is to trouble the otherwise-stable understanding of the word. As this paper (as well as "Possibilities in Archival Work") will demonstrate, 'history' is complex, and certainly not singular
[73] For example, the public dialogue when Pride Toronto selected Celina Jaitley as an international grand marshall in 2015.
[74] Which I understand as discourses that circulate in the public sphere. In this case, discourses in popular culture, in community-specific media, and in organizational or institutional memory.
[75] Christina Hanhardt, *Safe Space*

1980s onwards. If rainbows are the meteorological metaphor for queer and trans communities, this paper is a low pressure system coming in.[76]

Like the weather in some places in the world,[77] this paper will be a bit unpredictable – it is the culmination of two years of graduate work, and many more of my lived experience. It is a meditation on a set of communities that I have deep connections to, which I struggle with and against. Primarily though, this paper creates space for me to honour the multitude of ways that queer and trans 'south asians' in Toronto (and in the Greater Toronto Area more broadly) have considered community, belonging, art, politics, racism, the nation-state and more. Like Gayatri Gopinath, I have embarked on a "queer diasporic reading" practice[78] in my exploration of a variety of texts I consider a local queer diasporic archive for queer and trans 'south asians.' While Gopinath's articulation of a queer diasporic archive is one that is necessarily fractured and fragmented,[79] I instead offer up an imprecise and incomplete archive, one that is being (re)made by current community members and those to come.

What began as a focus on *Desh Pardesh*, a 'south asian' political arts festival hosted in Toronto from 1990 to 2001, is now a discussion about the routes, paths and trajectories of queer and trans 'south asian' organizing, with an emphasis on practices of cultural production and issues of racism. Using an interdisciplinary and intersectional[80] approach, I bring forward seemingly-disparate texts, facilitate a

---

[76] As a creative writer, I am draw to metaphors, and find their place in scholarly writing to be tenuous. However, as Avtar Brah reminds me "…far from being mere abstractions of a concrete reality, metaphors are part of the discursive materiality of power relations." *Cartographies of Diaspora*, page 198

[77] My attempt here is to de-centre the weight of 'here'

[78] *Impossible Desires*, page 21

[79] *Impossible Desires*, page 22

[80] Kimberlé Crenshaw, Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989.

conversation amongst them, and offer up new ways to consider memory, community and movement. The rain-shelter built for this exploration is one of a narrative form – encouraged by Minal Hajratwala, I hope that this format will allow for a complex exploration of queer and trans 'south asian' diasporas as well the affective elements of these diasporas.[81]

This paper begins with a personal grounding to highlight the situatedness of this work, then details the theoretical frameworks that have informed this writing as well as a discussion about the sources of data, my approach and the inherent risks. I introduce my analytical frame of 'hotspots' which is a term from ecological studies that has been expanded in this context, and discuss queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing through the lens of spatial, temporal and linguistic hotspots. As the pressure system continues its journey, I contemplate movement(s) for activisms, communities, histories and archives.

Intimacy as Political: Grounding the Work

The roots of this work are deep; this work began long ago.

I have often felt that I was born in the 'wrong' time, a feeling of displacement I attributed to multiple phenomena in my life, including the people I felt most comfortable spending time with (people my parents' age), the political frameworks that brought me awakenings (identity politics and intersectional feminisms), and the kinds of organizing

---

[81] "Intimate History: Reweaving Diaspora Narratives" *Cultural Dynamics*, 19(2/3), 2007, Her tools of research, vulnerability and speculation I find particularly interesting.

that excited me (that of the 1990s). Given my identity as a queer diasporic[82] sometimes-femme,[83] a child of immigrants, with complicated connections to 'south asia' it is almost-unsurprising that *Desh Pardesh*, a political arts festival hosted in Toronto from 1990 to 2001, would spark my interest in a multitude of ways. I cannot recall when or how I first heard about *Desh Pardesh*, and I take that to mean that perhaps I was meant to always hold it in my heart and mind. I often say that I grew up 'in the shadow of *Desh Pardesh*' and I realize the shadow is long, and wide.

This paper is a personal and political exploration of queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing in Toronto, focused on arts activisms in the time between the late 1980s and present. Having been involved with 'south asian' as well as queer and trans community organizing in the Greater Toronto Area (GTA) over the last several years, I have had the opportunity to hear stories, meet elders, create spaces, and support artists. These experiences have been humbling, inspiring, evocative and enthralling. With a complex relationship to time, I found myself shifting from past to present to future (in my mind) quite often, and realized that some consideration of the various moments of community activism in 'my'[84] communities could honour and celebrate the histories

---

[82] My sense of 'diasporic' is about a recognition of a place 'of origin,' a set of fissures that relate to that place (mentally, spiritually, physically, etc.). For me, diasporic is not inextricably linked with longing for 'home,' or with belonging. It is not about exile, either. Diasporic, in my personal definition, does not require 'fixing' or 'resolution.' In addition, my identification attempts to destabilize the nation-state as the primary marker for identity.

[83] As a sometimes-femme, I have an intentional and political relationship to femininity, especially markers of femininity including dress, makeup and accessories. This intentional political framework can be traced back to my conscious decision in junior high school to embody femininity (through a kind of performativity that was practiced and honed), though I would not hear of the term 'femme' till more than a decade later. The temporal qualifier (sometimes) indicates that my gender is under self-investigation.

[84] I am hesitant about utilizing any word that suggests ownership, or automatic belonging. A sense of community is quite complex, and as someone who struggles with presence (attending events), being visible (given health and mental health struggles), and desirability, I am using this term mostly with hesitation.

and people I have never (and will never) meet or know. This work is like doing research "nearby"[85] these queer and trans 'south asian' communities in Toronto.

What does community look like? What does it feel like? How do you know if there is community? Is it possible to have community anymore? Do we need leaders? These are questions I have contemplated, chatted about and animatedly debated with other queer and trans 'south asian' community members, in contexts as different at Toronto, San Francisco, Delhi, New Haven and Peterborough. Across these conversations, I have experienced my own reluctance at seemingly-easy answers, like 'there was a sense of community back then' or 'we just need to be better organized' and instead I sought refuge in the possibilities of decentralized organizing spaces, the vibrancy of communities enhanced by local autonomy and expression.[86]

This paper, the culmination of my years of organizing experience, many years of both discussion and isolation, and dedicated time within a graduate program, is a decentralized discussion about histories, narratives, communities and cultural production. Thus, alongside archival research, I bring it to my own lived experience (including my own memories), my political frameworks (which are influenced by both academic framings and community) and my jagged sense of time. Like Avtar Brah, I find this semi-autobiographical (or semi-autoethnographical) work useful in its challenging of

---

[85] This is a direct reference to Trinh T. Minh-ha's 1982 film *Reassemblage* where she says she will "just speak nearby" communities in Senegal, challenging traditional anthropological films that speak about communities.
[86] My entry point to discussions about decentralization is, in fact, in climate change contexts. Kartikeya Singh (co-founder of the Indian Youth Climate Network) has taught me much about decentralized energy in rural India (one of his areas of expertise). See his recent publication: Singh, Kartikeya. "Business innovation and diffusion of off-grid solar technologies in India." *Energy for Sustainable Development* 30 (2016): 1-13.

traditional history, while remaining always-interpretable, that is the very reading of my narratives here open possibilities for interpretation.[87]

Theoretical Frameworks

Using a deeply interdisciplinary approach, this paper is informed by several key frameworks and concepts.

Intersectionality functions as a core theoretical framework, as well as a primary organizing principle in my community based efforts. Coined by Black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989, Crenshaw's challenging of a single-axis framing allows for a broad understanding of the ways in which systems and structures of power intersect, resulting in materials impacts (privilege and marginalization).[88] In my exploration of queer and trans 'south asian' communities in the Toronto area, intersectionality provides a useful way to consider race, sexuality, gender and other areas of social location (and power). Given that *Desh Pardesh* was organized around the same time as Crenshaw's publication, I surmise that it is additionally useful to consider community organizing against political theory of that time. In this specific naming of intersectionality's roots, I am attempting to highlight its history and genealogy, which has often been forgotten by theorists, activists and diversity specialists alike.[89]

---

[87] *Cartographies of the diaspora*, page 10. In my creative work, I have been especially interested in the acts of interpretation – the spaces and times between performers and listeners/participants.

[88] "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" *University of Chicago Legal Forum*, 1989.

[89] Sara Ahmed points out that intersectionality "is often used in a way that forgets its genealogy within Black feminism and neutralizes its critical potential." *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. 2012,

As Ann Garry indicates, intersectionality "does not abolish identity categories; instead they become more complex, messy, and fluid." [90] As a way of bridging this concern, postmodern feminist writing points to the contributions of an intersectional approach to postmodern analyses of agency and subjectivities in particular.[91] While there does appear to be some tensions between intersectionality and postmodern feminist theory,[92] I wish to deploy intersectionality in a postmodern feminist manner. Specifically, I mean to deconstruct the categories of difference (power), pointing out how they impact material realities (oppression) and referring to a logic informed by something beyond complexity.[93] As Sora Y Han succinctly articulates, intersectionality offers multiple "modes of reading," i.e. generative, feminist, as social act, as ethical.[94]

Intersectionality makes messy the categorization of identities,[95] and it is this complexity that establishes it as a primary framework for my exploration of queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing and archives. While there are some who consider intersectionality a dated framing, I cannot help but echo Avtar Brah's creative response

> "There are those who find my call for the study of intersectionality as 'old-hat', the recitation of a 'mantra'. I would remind them that mantras are designed for repetition precisely because each repetitive act is expected to construct new meanings. Mantric enunciation is an act of transforming, not ossification."[96]

While Brah utilizes intersectionality in important ways in *Cartographies of Diaspora*, it is her conceptualization of diaspora that I find particularly compelling. Brah articulates an

---

[90] Ann Garry, 2011, page 83
[91] Brah and Phoenix 2004
[92] Gary 2011 and McCall 2005
[93] Lugones 1994
[94] Sora Y Han, 2006, page 187
[95] Garry 2011, page 83
[96] *Cartographies of Diaspora*, page 14.

understanding of diaspora that is not reliant on discourses of fixed origins, nor the singular notion of a return to a homeland that other theorists posit.[97] Instead, she points to new conceptualizations of location, border (or boundaries) and collectivities. This is based on her study of 'south asians' in Britain, as well as her personal autobiographical narratives and experiences. Gayatri Gopinath also explores the concept of diaspora (with her analytical texts also located in the UK) and points to the need for new formulations that challenge essentialist ideas about longing, home, and exile.[98]

Critiques of development are included in the texts of transnational feminist scholars, who challenge the ways in which the "Other" is created and reified in mainstream discourses.[99] Exploring the ways in which the discourses of colonialism work to create narrow understandings of the Global South (and particularly women in the Global South), transnational feminists often utilize post-colonial theory and studies in their approaches. This post-colonial approach describes and discusses process of colonialism and imperialism that continue to impact geopolitical realities, including the movement of people across borders. There is a significant body of literature focused on queer and trans communities in the Global South (including in India); this work informs global conversations about queer and trans people of colour, as evidenced earlier in the context of queer diasporas. Post-colonial frameworks are extremely useful for an examining of "south asian" queer and trans organizing in a place like Toronto, given

---

[97] *Cartographies of Diaspora* Page 180.
[98] *Impossible Desires*
[99] See for example Chandra Mohanty and Uma Narayan

immigration and settlement patterns, as well as the complex relationships between Canada and 'countries of origin.'[100]

The notion that racialized people or people of colour are *always* from 'somewhere else' is a part of the landscape of race relations in Canada. A commonly-referenced point of discussion for communities of colour is how they are asked "where are you really from?" on a regular basis – this idea of belonging (or visiting) is highlighted in Eva Mackey's articulation of Canadian-Canadians (which 'south asians' are most definitely not).[101] This analysis is part of broader critical studies literature, that in Canada focuses on process of nation-building – these nation-building processes require the displacement of Indigenous people, the erasure of historical Black communities, and the restriction of racialized immigrant communities. In the case of 'south asians' in Canada, there is significant literature about histories of inclusion and exclusion – ranging from exclusionary immigration laws, to more contemporary dialogues about nominal inclusion.[102] Critical race theorists in Canada also point to discourses of multiculturalism, whether related to official multiculturalism or in popular culture. These discourses generate an image of Canada as a tolerant and welcoming place.

The myths of multiculturalism are one of the ways that Andil Gosine and Cheryl Teelucksingh articulate environmental racism in Canada.[103] With a focus on multiculturalism rather than anti-racism, it becomes extremely difficult to have

---

[100] 'Countries of origin' is often how government bureaucracies in Canada describe the places from which people migrated. In everyday language of community workers, this phrase is interchangeable with "home countries."
[101] *House of Difference*
[102] Available mostly to middle-class 'south asian' men, whose origins are mostly north Indian, educated and upper-caste.
[103] *Environmental Racism in Canada*

conversations about the ways in which race impacts the ability to access healthy environmental resources, be represented in environmental activities or participate in advocacy efforts that speak to lived realities. My own experience doing environmental work (and in particular, climate change organizing) aligns with the perspectives outlined by Gosine and Teelucksingh. A foundation for understanding environmental racism is the work of Black environmental justice activists from the southern US, including Robert Bullard.[104] By making connections between resources, race, poverty and activism, Black communities mobilized to demand accountability and justice for the impact of racist and oppressive policies (such as siting) upon their material lives.

These interdisciplinary frameworks are useful frameworks with which to discuss queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing, with a multitude of sites for this conversations.

Across Terrains

The interdisciplinary nature of this paper requires a broad range of sources – with an iterative process of seeking, reviewing, compiling and revisiting texts. These texts include archival materials (specifically the holdings about *Desh Pardesh*) housed at the Clara Scott Archives (York University) and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA). The archival materials were both primary and secondary in nature, and included festival programs, correspondence, as well as some media coverage. To collect data about the wide range of queer and trans 'south asian' organizing efforts in Toronto from the late 1980s onwards, I attempted to seek as much information directly from web or print resources of affiliated individuals, groups, collectives or organizations.

---

[104] *Dumping in Dixie*

In addition, information about broader anti-racist activisms in Toronto was compiled. Documentation of queer and trans, as well as 'south asian' (or racialized broadly) community organizing was found in both traditional (narratives and descriptions online and in print) and in emerging (social media) mediums. Scholarly sources include texts on queer and trans of colour communities, explorations of history and the archive (with a focus on marginalized communities), structures of race in the Canadian nation-state, as well as texts on cultural production in the context of queer and trans communities.

In an effort to 'queer' this exploration of community activisms, this paper also utilizes two additional sources of information, both ephemeral.[105] Firstly, my own recollections, reflections and personal archive as someone who has participated in community organizing over the past several years mostly focused on the arts. Second are the community-based knowledges that circulate, with weight and purpose. As Kwame Holmes[106] has demonstrated, gossip can be understood as its own archive, pointing to the ways that information circulates *outside of formal or dominant discourses*. While gossip is not the only form of community-based knowledge that I refer to within the second ephemeral source of data, Holmes' framing provides a useful entry into a conversation about authenticity, verification and 'truth.'

A significant limitation in institutional knowledge production is that community knowledges are sometimes treated as limited, unusual, infrequent and sometimes, unreliable. There is much information, anecdotal and otherwise, that I consider part of the broader community knowledge base - this information that I *just know* (without knowing the primary source), that I have gleaned from others in casual conversations,

---

[105] Jose Esteban Munoz, "Ephemera as Evidence: Introductory Notes to Queer Acts" *Women & Performance: a journal of feminist theory*, 1996
[106] *Radical History Review*

that I read on a listserv, that I heard whispers of. Attempting to find an original source could prove to be impossible. *How do we document the things we know about ourselves, and our communities? How do we document the things are lived knowledges, and everyday networking?* This paper attempts to map these disparate knowledges across their various terrains, recognizing both the tensions and the opportunities that arise with their co-locations.[107]

Approach

This paper, informed by feminist, postcolonial, critical race, and queer and trans theories, will use feminist ethnography as its broad base method. Ethnography allows for both specificity and breadth in the approach. With a personal and political dimension, ethnography offers an opportunity to deconstruct dominant discourses,[108] as well as to be deliberate in practices of "choosing, doing, analyzing and writing, and endings."[109] So, the selection of data, the field work[110], the analysis and the ways in which the work is represented will be carefully considered through the analytical frameworks I am utilizing, and will incorporate practices of self-reflexivity. Given that this essay has a social justice lens, and could also be considered progressive praxis.[111] Encouraged by

---

[107] I am relying on my health and social systems knowledge here: co-location is a "new" (perhaps, reintroduced) concept where organizations share space across geographies to best serve clients/community members, while still maintaining individual organizational recognition and autonomy. Compared to a satellite model (where one organization could be subsumed by another), co-location allows for each organization to maintain some version of its own site(s).

[108] "Feminist Ethnography" *Encyclopaedia of gender and society*, Ed. J. O'Brien. 2009. Page 310

[109] Wanda Pillow and Cris Mayo, "Feminist Ethnography: Histories, Challenges, and Possibilities." *The Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*. 2nd edition. Ed Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber. 2012, page 189

[110] I am referring to 'field work' broadly here – to include the work of discourse analysis.

[111] Sharad Chari and Henrike Donner, "Ethnographies of Activism: A Critical Introduction" *Cultural Dynamics*, 22(2), 2010, 75-85.

Sarah Ahmed's "ethnography of texts," I am seeking to "follow" queer and trans 'south asian' community activisms around, including in their institutional or popular context.[112]

Importantly, I am utilizing autoethnography, with a recognition that the binaries between insider and outsider detailed in some definitions of this method[113] must be troubled. Arthur P. Bochner's assertion that autoethnographic works must be verified similar to other social sciences work is quite telling – this reliance on a narrow understanding of truth highlights the value of specific forms of knowledge production. In an examination of archives of slavery, Katherine McKittrick challenges the ways that verification is positioned to destabilize visible and know-able realities.[114]   This essay and its presence in the broader portfolio also work to be a type of archive intervention. As Rebecca Taves Sheffield describes it, archive intervention seeks to facilitate relationships (through interest and engagement) between archives and communities served by the archive.[115]

Dangerous Times

Critical conversations about race, sexuality, gender and their intersections are risky as they draw attention to structures and striations of the world we live in. For so long, these conversations were restricted, censored or retaliated. In the contemporary, despite changes to institutions and policies, there still remain material risks to those who initiate or participate in these conversations. Broadly speaking, these can include bullying,

---

[112] *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional of Live*, 2012, page 12
[113] Including Tony E. Adams and Stacy Homan Jones," Telling Stories: Reflexivity, Queer Theory, and Autoethnography" *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*, 11(2), and Arthur P.Bochner "On First-Person Narrative Scholarship: Autoethnography as Acts of Meaning" *Narrative Inquiry*, 22(1), 2012, 155-164
[114] *Demonic Grounds*
[115] "The Beside Table Archives: Archive Intervention and Lesbian Intimate Domestic Culture" *Radical History Review*, 120, 2014, page 110.

physical harm, lost economic opportunities, isolation, and various forms of persecution. This violence is not evenly distributed amongst those racialized, queer or trans people, however. Given new and increasing social media technologies and tools, new forms of violence are being perpetuated - and the uneven distribution continues.[116]

Critical work focused on communities that experience marginalization or oppression presents a number of risks as well. These range from the possibility that the research will result in unwarranted attention (such as policing or regulation) to the potential of conflicts surfacing for members of the community. The institutional ethics review process is designed to identify those potential harms, and asks researchers to consider and plan ways to minimize (or mitigate) the harm – however the process relies on an understanding of research that is often not-community driven or participatory.[117] This means that the support for development of harm reduction protocols or processes may not be as fulsome as needed.[118] Given that the methods selected for this paper do not involve interacting with any 'human subjects' thus requiring no institutional ethics review board processes, the practical risks appear low. However, as Sophie Tamas states, there are real and deep risks for autoethnographic work, especially that which includes some discussion of trauma.[119]

There are additional personal risks in doing a kind-of-archival project that considers contemporary activisms, as there are still memories, reflections, objectives, that circulate in the atmospheres of the Toronto area. This circulation means that there

---

[116] This uneven distribution includes the ways in which, for example, Muslim men (or those interpreted as Muslim), trans women of colour, and cis women from the Global South are treated on social media such as Twitter.
[117] This is from my own knowledge as a community worker who participated in research projects that were partnered with academic institutions.
[118] Again, this is based in my work as a worker in a community health setting.
[119] "Autoethnography, Ethics, and Making your Baby Cry" *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*, 11(3), 258-264

is a self-interrogation I must embark on: *am I one of the right people to be doing this work? In this manner? How do my personal recollections mingle with the experiences and memories of those whose organizing is discussed?*

    This work is risky because it is messy. The messy nature of the work is because it is queer, because it is intersectional, because sharing stories about the work that people did is never simple, because there can be no neatness to describe the context or content. There is an imprecise nature to this paper. It cannot be completed or finished because the conversations are continuing – happening right now – in public, private and online spaces. Like Naisargi N. Dave, I am utilizing this incompleteness as a way of encouraging self-reflection and provocation.[120]

Hotspots

To facilitate a nuanced discussion of queer and trans 'south asian' organizing in Toronto, I will utilize the concept of 'hotspots.' My entry into a hotspots framing has been mediated through three distinct articulations of the nature of hotspots.

    Firstly, a broadly ecological approach to hot spots: In ecological writing, 'hotspots' can be understood as places where there is a specific concentration of value, resources, resilience, and abundance.[121] Hotspot mapping has been used in various disciplines (including public health and physical sciences), and has operationalized various tools (including GIS).

---

[120] *Queer Activism in India: A Story in the Anthropology of Ethics* 2012, page 27.
[121] Lilian (Naia) Alessa, Andrew (Anaru) Kliskey, Gregory Brown "Social-ecological hotspots mapping: A spatial approach for identifying coupled social-ecological space" *Landscape and Urban Planning*, 85, 2008, 27-39 and John N. Parker and Edward J. Hackett "Hot Spots and Hot Moments in Scientific Collaborations and Social Movements." *American Sociological Review*; 77(1), 21-44

Secondly, a personal experience of creative autobiographical writing. In a recent creative writing course focused on autobiographical writing,[122] Dianah Smith, the instructor, asked participants to do a 'free write' responding to a specific prompt. After the free write, we were asked to return to the piece and take note of the 'hotspots,' those places that rise to the surface, were a surprise, or that could be fleshed out a bit further.

Thirdly, the most-common understanding: Wi-Fi hotspots. The most frequent use of the word hotspot in my personal, professional and community life is in the context of Wi-Fi, or being able to get access to the internet in various spaces, but mostly in public spaces. In this context, hotspot refers to access.

History does not work (Or, the utility of hotspots)

I am utilizing hotspots as a way of arranging conversations about queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing for a number of reasons. Firstly, hotspots act as an alternate to traditional conceptualizations of history, as well as to traditional tools like timelines and chronologies. There is a well-establish body of literature that considers the ways in which dominant (including official, or state-based) historical narratives and documents seek to raise some voices, and silence others.[123] Timelines and chronologies package history as linear, and include dates that are of value to those who are compiling the timeline. In the example of Canadian history, most mainstream chronologies begin when Europeans arrived (to colonize). As stated in a Vancouver

---

[122] There is synergy between the autoethnographic elements of this work, and the creative (semi) autobiographical work I am doing in the course entitled "Writing Ourselves Whole" with Dianah Smith
[123] See for example the work described in part two of this portfolio.

Status of Women Canada report: "neither history nor the existence of the land now called Canada begins with the arrival of White Europeans to this land."[124]

Disappearances

Critical scholars (particularly from post-colonial studies) point to the unearthing or surfacing of the absences within historical archives, narratives or discourses. The focus on absence aligns with practices such a history from below, and reveals the curvature of dominant structures. The precarity and fragility of urban spaces mean that the reality of disappearance is always on the horizon. Processes of gentrification (within the complexities of globalization)[125], along with institutionalization and violence have played a role in such disappearances.

Euclid Theatre's Disappearance

Desh Pardesh could not have emerged and developed into the festival (and organization) it did without the explicit support of community arts organizations. In particular, the Euclid Theatre played a crucial role, as the inaugural partner with Khush, and as the host for early *Desh Pardesh* events.[126] The Euclid Theatre's support of community-based queer and trans arts events was not limited to *Desh Pardesh*. It had also hosted early runs Toronto's Inside Out film festival, as well as providing space for their office.[127]

[124] Vancouver Status of Women *History in our Faces on Occupied Land: A Race Relations Timeline*. 2008, page 3
[125] Haritaworn, Jin. *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places*. London: Pluto Press, 2015.
[126] Fernandez, Archives at Clara Scott Archives
[127] http://www.dailyxtra.com/arts-and-entertainment/brief-history-inside-107227

In 1998, the building at the northwest corner of College and Euclid was converted to condos, and a Starbucks now occupies the main level.[128] When the opportunity to purchase a condo at 394 Euclid Avenue emerged in 1998, the 18 "affordable vintage lofts" were sold in a matter of hours.[129] It appears that the supposedly-recent phenomenon of a rapidly-moving housing market has some connections to Toronto's changing neighbourhoods in late 1990s.[130] As a recent comparison, in 2013, a one-bedroom unit was listed for $489,000,[131] and in the spring of 2015, a three-story loft was listed for $679,900.[132]

The history and impact of the Euclid Theatre has been erased through processes of gentrification, as well as changes in institutional funding.[133] Yet its roots as a supportive space for well-known arts figures (such as Mongrel Media CEO Hussain Amarshi, who formerly managed the theatre,[134] and Ian Iqbal Rashid[135]), one-time events (like Race to the Screen, focused on issues of race and film[136]), and, of course, festivals, remains under-seen. In downtown spaces of Toronto, gentrification is a reality, whether ongoing or as a potential, and it is not simply the disappearance of the physicality of the Euclid Theatre that demands exploration and remembering. It is also worth pausing at the disappearance of the cultural role it played in community, the

---

[128] http://www.blogto.com/city/2013/09/house_of_the_week_movie_house_lofts_394_euclid_ave/
[129] http://www.urbaneer.com/listings/my_college_crush_in_little_italys_movie_house
[130] This is a hotspot of discussion in my personal, familial and professional life: I have discussed home ownership at length with various queer and trans folks of colour; my father and brother-in-law are real estate agents, and the latter focuses on new condo development; I am a licensed mortgage agent.
[131] http://www.blogto.com/city/2013/09/house_of_the_week_movie_house_lofts_394_euclid_ave/
[132] http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/home-and-garden/real-estate/home-of-the-week-250000-reno-makes-euclid-loft-dazzle/article23994657/
[133] Janine Marchessault "Of Bicycles and Films: The Case of *CineCycle*" *Public*, 40, 2009, page 96
[134] http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/mongrel-media-ceo-turns-passion-for-film-into-box-office-successes-1.1292369
[135] http://takeone.athabascau.ca/index.php/takeone/article/viewFile/101/95
[136] http://takeone.athabascau.ca/index.php/takeone/article/viewFile/101/95

potential that downtown neighbourhoods like Little Italy *can* in fact have community theatre (and arts, broadly) spaces, and the need to trace movements in the arts community (small or large) to a history of spaces just like the Euclid Theatre.

Independent Bookstores' Disappearance

Like independent arts spaces such as theatres, independent bookstores have played an important role in cultivating a climate of collaboration, creativity and exchange for activists in Toronto. Much has been written about the increasingly-arid landscape of independent bookstores in Toronto, among other cities. News of an independent bookstore closing its doors in Toronto occurs on a seemingly-regular basis, with common narratives for their demise: increased rents in the city, and decreased revenue (due to competition from big box bookstores as well as online retailers). For marginalized communities, including queer and trans 'south asians,' independent bookstores play multiple roles, and their disappearances result in multiple impacts, not just related to a place to shop.

Early on in my explorations of *Desh Pardesh* archival materials, I paid attention to the physical spaces – addresses and organizations – that seemed to play a role in facilitating the festival. Independent bookstores sold tickets for the festival, and I registered both familiar (like the Toronto Women's Bookstore and This Ain't the Rosedale Library) and unfamiliar names (like Third World Books). Each of these bookstores played an integral role in the broader community, for events and festivals like *Desh Pardesh*, but also for community activists who started, frequented and supported these community organizations – after all, many functioned more like community hubs than for-profit businesses.

The first time I visited the Toronto Women's Bookstore was in 2006 to attend a writing group facilitated by Dianah Smith, and I was so drawn to the space with its packed shelves, its friendly women of colour staff, and its community-based nature evident by the writing group and the full-to-edges event calendar. In its for-profit incarnation, I attending another writing group with Dianah Smith there, and felt hopeful that despite the crisis that led to its shift from a non-profit, it would find a way to remain a staple in Toronto. I, like many other people was wrong, and it closed its doors in 2012 after nearly 40 years.[137] Other independent bookstores made the same kinds of impact on me – on Queen Street West, I paired visits to Black Market, a large vintage store, with those to Pages, feeling both encouraged and overwhelmed by the size of the store; and the first time I saw a zine for sale was in This Ain't the Rosedale Library. These bookstores created opportunities for those newly-politicized (like me in the early 2000s) as well as seasoned activists to get access to important texts, to find out about literary and other cultural events in the city, and to know we were supporting local businesses.

All of the bookstores mentioned here are no longer operating, their disappearances occurring between 2000 and 2012. Two disappearances rise to the surface: Third World Books, and This Ain't the Rosedale Library. Though they operated in distinctly different neighbourhoods, and closed ten years apart, their roles in the community, and the sorrow with which their disappearance was met, are strikingly similar.

Third World Books, opened in November 1968 by Leonard (Lenny) and Gwendolyn (Gwen) Johnston, and became a source of knowledge, hard to find texts, a centre for Toronto's Black communities who have been battling anti-Black racism in

[137] http://torontoist.com/2012/10/toronto-womens-bookstore-is-closing-for-good/

many forms. Understanding that the bookstore played a part in responding to racist absences in education (in particular, history), Gwendolyn said "They just tried to cut us out of history and so we feel that in a small way, we've been able to open these doors."[138] Third World Books closed in 2000, after Leonard's 1998 death.

Like Third World Books, This Ain't the Rosedale Library had shifted from one part of the city (Queen Street East) to another (Church and Wellesley) and finally to another (Kensington Market) over its lifetime. Having opened in 1979, the store carried unique texts from local and international authors, a focus on the arts, and had a family feel given that it was owned by a father-son duo. The pressures of competition – now understood as usual for independent bookstores – combined with the recession of the late 2000s resulted in a difficult financial situation for the owners, and despite their attempts to negotiate with their landlord, the locks on their unit were changed, and they ended up closing in June 2010.[139] Community members responded to the changed locks and notice on the entrance to This Ain't the Rosedale Library with their own interpretation, as noted by *Quill & Quire*. The image below does not indicate all of the writing, but the accompanying *Quill & Quire* article indicates the phrases as "4 Rent by Greedy Landlord"; "Burn Books 4 Heat & Light"; "Show Me da Muny"; and "Cumming Soon: Starbux."[140] This community commentary speaks loudly about gentrification, profit, multinational corporations, and with the particular spelling of "cumming," perhaps a disappearance of the space with an undertone of sexual assault. It should be noted

---

[138] http://torontoist.com/2015/02/historicist-third-world-books-and-crafts/
[139] https://thisaintblog.wordpress.com/
[140] Nathan Whitlock, "This Ain't the Rosedale Starbucks?" *Quill & Quire*, June 29, 2010. http://www.quillandquire.com/book-news/2010/06/29/this-aint-the-rosedale-starbucks/

that no Starbucks came to the location, and it is currently a craft shop called Yarns Untangled.

Figure 1: Community response at This Ain't the Rosedale Library in 2010

The Disappearances of Three Men from the Village

In June 2013, the Toronto Police Service (TPS) alerted the public that they were investigating three missing persons cases, together, suggesting that their disappearances were connected. Abdulbasir "Basir" Faizi was last seen at Steamworks[141] on December 29, 2010; Majeed "Hamid" Kayhan was last seen around Alexander & Yonge Streets on October 14 or 18, 2012; Shandaraj "Skanda" Navaratnam was last seen on September 6, 2010 leaving Zipperz.[142] While there had been public outreach regarding Navaratnam's disappearance in 2010, organized mostly by his friends, the TPS announcement brought forward renewed attention, and some alarming suggestions about the possibility of targeted disappearances. The media attention revealed much about the contours of Toronto's Church-Wellesley Village, the

---

[141] A large bathhouse located near Church and Wellesley
[142] Zipperz is a well-known nightclub located near Carlton and Church. Various media outlets covered the Toronto Police Service (TPS) announcement including *Xtra*, *National Post*, *The Toronto Star* and *The Toronto Sun*. In addition, this news was included on the website *Ontario's Missing Adults*.

TPS' articulations of race and ethnicity, and about contemporary discussions of being in/out for men of colour.

The TPS announcement stated that the connection amongst the three men were their shared ethnicities. As El-Farouk Khaki pointed out in an interview with *Xtra*, there were, in fact, not similarities.[143] Interestingly, the LGBT Consultative Committee of the Toronto Police Service posted no information about the case in June 2013 on their Facebook page – though perhaps that was due to the staff representative travelling to train Police officers in Montenegro on the "Report Homophobic Violence, Period" campaign.[144]

There was wide coverage in mainstream media in June 2013,[145] but since that time, little information has been provided to the public. Media outlets spread the message that the three men had similar ethnicities (only Xtra was able to get the TPS to clarify their statement), and interviewed individuals in the Church-Wellesley Village. The concern about safety in the Village expressed by some interviewees is incongruent with the community organizing efforts since the disappearances. Some news stories (notably Xtra) wrote about the 'closested' nature of at least one of the missing men, while others simply reported that the men went missing from the Village, and had a wife and/or children in a suburban context. Skanda, however, was very 'out,' know in the community, and perhaps even a political refugee from Sri Lanka. His friends had initially organized some efforts to locate him, including a Facebook page that has subsequently been taken down. In February, 2014, an email from a member of TPS's LGBTQ

---

[143] http://www.dailyxtra.com/canada/news-and-ideas/news/piecing-together-the-story-three-missing-men-from-torontos-gay-village-61654
[144] As per Facebook page
[145] Including the Toronto Star, Xtra, the National Post and more.

Community Relations Committee was sent across the Rainbow Health Network (RHN) listserv, with bulletins attached.

Cartography

Mapping Space on a Jagged Landscape

Toronto, like many other large cities in North America, has a 'village' that is host to various queer and trans support organizations, businesses and community-based events (including Pride celebrations). On a jagged landscape that recognizes the Village as queer and the city as segregated by racialized pockets (e.g. Chinatown, Little India, Korea Town, etc.), queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing and arts activisms reveal new cartographic activities.

The suburbs play a unique role for queer and trans 'south asians' - I hear from community members who, like me, grew up in the suburbs, and they often share mixed feelings. Remembering friends or family, remembering isolation, and very regularly, remembering the desire to get away as soon as possible. And yet, the suburbs have been host to a wide range of community organizing. A workshop at *Desh Pardesh* called "So I Came Out to My Mom at the Dixie Mall Foodcourt"[146] led to the production of the film *Re-Writing the Script: A Love Letter to our Families.*[147] Dixie Mall is a mall in the south-east part of Mississauga, and prior to its recent gentrification[148] it was a run-down mall with outlet stores, and good place to shop to get a deal. LAL,[149] a band based in Toronto that is influenced by a range of musical genres (including South Asian

---

[146] Fernandez, Sharon.

[147] Friday Night Productions, 2001

[148] In the last few years, the mall has changed noticeably, with the selection of stores. I attribute this to a particular suburban gentrification taking place in the south east part of Mississauga (the neighbourhood I grew up in, and where I worked for 5 years). This type of gentrification is not discussed at length in literature, as there is often an assumption that gentrification takes place only in urban settings.

[149] Singer Rosina Kazi performed at *Desh Pardesh* (personal knowledge)

and West Indian) has played various queer and trans events in the suburbs, including several years performing in Mississauga at Pride Week in Peel.[150] Rather than organize everything in downtown Toronto, community organizers recognize that queer and trans 'south asians' are often inhabiting suburban spaces, and hold events at university campuses, community centres and libraries. Given my context of the suburbs – both writing from a former suburb of Toronto (pre-amalgamation) and having grown up and organized in a suburb that borders Toronto (Mississauga), at this junction I cannot ignore the ways that the solidity (or tangibility) of queer and trans spaces in Toronto sets up expectations for how community *should* look. I have been told that queer and trans community would be much better off if there was a gay village in either Mississauga or Brampton. However, I wonder about the need for this form of centralization. For queer and trans 'south asian' community members, the suburbs can play an important role, whether real or imagined.

The online world provides new ways of mapping community spaces for queer and trans 'south asians.' These online spaces include websites, Facebook and tumblr pages, Twitter hashtags, online campaigns, blogs and more. In 2014, the Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention (ASAAP) released its "Brown n Proud" campaign, aimed at queer brown men, and using online (or mobile) dating profiles as its basis. The context for this work was the Imagine Men's Health Study[151] which explored racism, homophobia, identity and body image for ethno-racial[152] men who have sex with men,

---

[150] Personal knowledge – I booked LAL many times given their artistic ferocity, their connections to the suburbs singer Rosina Kazi is from Brampton), and how much they support grassroots organizing.
[151] http://www.catie.ca/sites/default/files/Colour%20Matters_IMH%20REPORT%202013%20Final.pdf
[152] This is the term that the research study uses.

with the results showing that 'south asian' men were not represented well in mainstream queer spaces.[153]
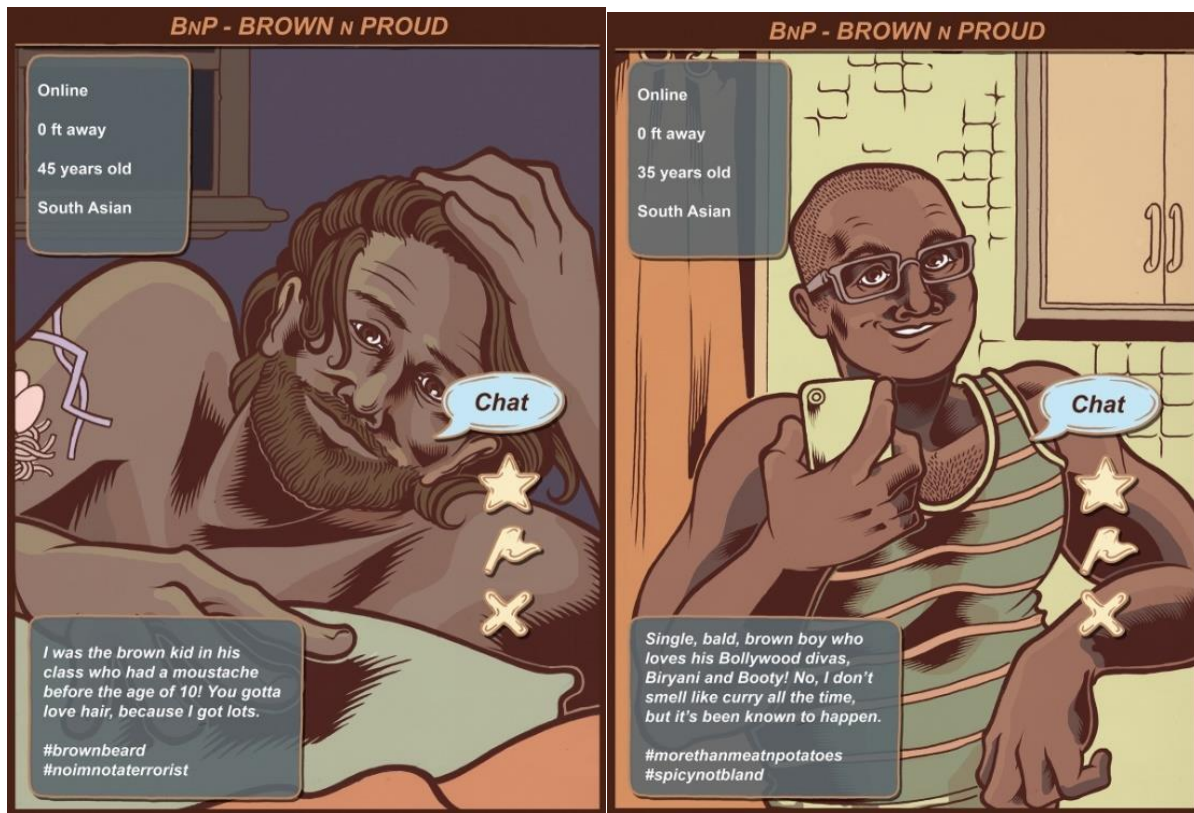

Figure 2 Brown n Proud Campaign Images

Another example of online community space is the Mirchi group and listserv – this support group for queer women was also hosted by ASAAP – which operated as an in-person group during the 2000s. By the time that I got onto the listserv in the late 2000s, the group was not meeting in person (likely due to funding constraints). The last official in person presence of Mirchi was its receipt of funding from the Community One Foundation[154]in 2006[155] and participating in the Pride parade float with Among Friends

---

[153] http://dosti.ca/brownnproud/
[154] Which at that time was still known as the Lesbian and Gay Appeal)
[155] http://communityone.ca/2006_lgca_grant_recipients-67.html

(a queer and trans newcomer support program) in 2007.[156] After Mirchi ceased in person organizing, the listserv lived on, and it was utilized by queer and trans 'south asian' women to promote events, recruit program participants and more.

Translations

Like all organizers or artists, queer and trans 'south asian' community members select names that are catchy and easy to remember. To make obvious that the events have some sort of 'south asian' or some sort of queer and trans content or framing, selective words or phrases are used. Again, it is not surprising that organizers and artists select names that would be appropriate to the communities they are hoping to attract.

There is, however, a specific representation of names that appear to be Hindi in nature, revealing a Hindi-centricity in Toronto's queer and trans 'south asian' organizing. These include Besharam, Rangeela, *Desh Pardesh*, Masala Channel, Masala Militia, Mirchi, Khush and Dosti. It should be noted that there are linguistic overlaps between Hindi and Urdu, so in some cases, organizers identify the word or phrase as both Hindi and Urdu (this is the case for *Desh Pardesh*, for example). In addition to the selection of vernacular words, there is a trend to select names that refer to the colour 'brown' such as Brown Like Me (film), Chillin' in your Brown Skin (collective), Brown n Proud (campaign), brOWN//out (show). This marker for skin works to construct these events, films and groups as racialized.

The Curious Case of Translating *Desh Pardesh*

After the success of the one day event called Salaam Toronto! organized by Khush, the 'south asian' gay men's organization in 1988, the decision was made to organize something again (and something bigger). While the first *Desh Pardesh* was held in

---

[156] Personal communication on the listserv

1990, archival materials indicate that the initial name selected was "KHALLA" which translates to "arts." Between a planning meeting on December 6, 1989 and February 12, 1990, the name was changed, with "Des/Pardes" as the original spelling.[157] Before the 1990 festival, the spelling was altered to "Desh Pardesh," which remained fairly consistent – though the 1991 press release spelled it "Desh Pradesh."[158]

The translations in both official materials and in the media are interesting in their range: home in exile, home without home, home away from home, home and abroad, home out of home. Given the earlier discussion about the tensions in diasporic identities relationships to home, it is no surprise that the organizers of *Desh Pardesh* would choose a name with multiple, complex meanings.

In conversations with queer and trans 'south asian' community members, I have heard various interpretations of the term of as well. These additional translations include 'nation and foreign' as well as 'here and there.' All of the translations offer an opportunity for insight into ways of understanding identities for racialized communities in Toronto. Though official discourse from the 1980s onward was specific about referring to 'south asians' and other racialized communities as "visible minorities," there were other internal conversation about the sense of belonging that likely informed *Desh Pardesh*. The multiplicity of translations (and interpretations) works to suggest that identity - whether tied to race, nation-state, a sense of diaspora, etc. – remains a source of interpretation and struggle.

Pronunciations

---

[157] 2007-042/001 at Clara Scott Archives
[158] Ibid.

Even within queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing, issues of representation, inclusion and exclusion remain. For *Desh Pardesh*, recognition of the heterogeneity of 'south asian' identities was key, and festival events represented a wide variety of identities. In some ways, it appears that there was great representation of the heterogeneity during *Desh Pardesh* than in some more contemporary queer and trans 'south asian' events. Examples include 1994's introduction of a new Tamil caucus focused on issues of exile and transition,[159] the representation of Indo-Caribbean women activists including Ramabai Espinet in planning, support for the work of HIV/AIDS activists including Kalpesh Oza (who was honoured after his death, at the 1997 festival). Representation and community engagement does involve making mistakes and learning from them, however – and the 1993 festival received feedback about its scheduling dates that conflicted with Ramadan. The commentator wondered if this was an oversight or if there were issues of power at the planning table - I understand that there are Muslims on the Advisory Board. Were these people silenced or did they not realize these dates?"[160]

---

[159] Desh Pardesh Archives, 1994 from CLGA
[160] 2007-042-001 1993 from Clara Scott Archives

Movement(s): making moves, making waves

There are possibilities for movement – not because there has been stillness, but because we must always keep moving. Queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing has shifted and changed in the years since the early 1990s when *Desh Pardesh* was in its infancy; since then governments have changed, norms in broader queer and trans communities have shifted, there is additional legislation and policy,[161] and an increasing public dialogue on issues of sexuality and gender. The range of community organizing since then includes parties (Funk Asia, Besharam, Rangeela), publications with (Rungh, though it was not based in Toronto), support groups in-person and online (Dosti, Snehithan, Mirchi), stages at Pride Toronto (Funk Asia, brOWN//out, Bend it like Bombay), community arts programs (Asian Arts Freedom School, Q? Y Art?) and most recently, the launch of an online queer and trans 'south asian' community space (a colour deep). Activist organizations like the members of the Chillin' in your Brown Skin collective worked to intervene at mainstream 'south asian' spaces like Masala! Mehndi! Masti! Festival; more recent examples of intervening with a changing 'south asian' mainstream cultural representation including Daniel Pillai who works as a journalist at Anokhi Media, and mybindi.com recognizing Vivek Shraya for her contributions to the broader 'south asian' community.

There are also opportunities for further intervention – in particular related to Indigenous solidarity, and anti-Black racism. This is not to suggest that these are new ways of organizing, as the archives and community knowledges indicate otherwise. However, with a shifting landscape of race relations in Canada that positions 'south

---

[161] I am referring to the 2012 addition of "gender identity and expression" to Ontario's Human Rights Code

asians' as more privileged (in relationship to other racialized groups)[162] there is

possibility that in addition to not knowing deep histories of struggle and activism, 'south

asians' could also not remember/forget that there have been coalition, alliances,

solidarities in struggle.

_____

---

[162] Given access to political power, for example

what a mess

After time the bitter taste
Of innocence, descent or race
Scattered seeds, buried lives
Mysteries of our disguise revolve
Circumstance will decide …
Portishead, "Sour Times"[164]

I have always been a messy person. From indistinguishable piles of clothes in my bedroom, to papers piled precariously high in every office I have had the luxury of inhabiting. Once I started living on my own,[165] I gave myself permission to fill my apartments with 'stuff.' Work, community organizing, personal relationships and my own interests mingled on the floor, on any and every surface, and in bookshelves. I feel completely at ease when my bed is half-filled with papers, books, pens and a laptop - I sleep well knowing that my life is at hand.

This mess is not limited to the material aspects of my life. With experiences of complicated and sometimes unhealthy relationships (including monogamy and non-monogamy), a very large extended family, and a history of mental health struggles, much of my life feels messy to me. So much of my daily energy is spent on navigating clutter, whether trying not to trip on my way to the kitchen or figuring out how to arrange my words to share something personal with a family member whose life is quite different from mine. The mess extends further, stretching into a conceptual messiness - I find it

---

[163] No original source, but this phrase was shared with me by a family member
[164] *Dummy*, 1994
[165] As the first person in my extended family to do so, before marriage

hard to keep track of time (temporal mess), my partnerships become ambiguous (relational mess), and I begin to lose myself in queer diasporic archives; I reframe the archives as a broader space that includes my own journey and participation (archival mess). The autoethnographic narrative presented here is, as Arthur P. Bochner states, "not intended to be received, but rather to be encountered, conversed with and appreciated."[166]

I am choosing not to clean up, but instead "live with, against, and despite the mess."[167]

I want to find my way into the middle(s), and then disrupt or disturb all the processes and experiences of doing queer diasporic archival work in the context of (personal) struggle. Martin Manalansan's "The 'Stuff' of Archives: Mess, Migration, and Queer Lives" has been churning its way through me, and the affectively interdisciplinary nature of the text demands close attention; so, Manalansan's work will play a foundational role in this essay. Encouraged by Manalansan, I will deploy mess in three ways here: firstly as an area of inquiry; secondly as a code in my discourse analysis; and finally as a methodology. This essay utilizes autoethnography as its method, weaving together multiple modes of discussion and hurdling across content that includes barely surviving the non-profit industrial complex, the bureaucracies of post-secondary education, the sense of 'smallness' (but not intimacy) in Toronto's queer and trans of colour communities as well as the persistently gradual degradation or loss of 'home.'

---

[166] "On first-person narrative scholarship Autoethnography as acts of meaning* *Narrative Inquiry*, 22(1), 2012, page 161

[167] Martin Manalansan, "The 'Stuff' of Archives: Mess, Migration, and Queer Lives." *Radical History Review*, 120, 2014, page 104-105.

Institutions and structures weave their way through the narrative and poetry in this paper, their presence (whether direct, or implied) points to the ways in which communities of colour negotiate with the nation-state and national imaginaries. In my own family, this includes negotiation with immigration, police and prison, health and mental health, shelter and social services, as well as education systems. I contrast the ways my parents have considered 'stuff' given their experience of migration, poverty and eventually middle class livelihoods, with my own experiences of community organizing, paid work, time and energy muddling together. There are connections here. While a genealogy is not presented here, this narrative is informed by an eye to the past - my head tilts as I concentrate on remembering – a conjuring up of the stories I have been told, by my family (biological or chosen[168]), by those artists, activists and theorists who articulated queer and trans archives before I understood what that meant.[169]

---

[168] This phrase suggests a binary between biological and chosen family, but in my experience the two categories are closer, less discrete.

[169] These include Kamala Das (*My Story*, 1988), Vivek Shraya (*God Loves Hair*, 2010), Gloria Anzaldua (*Borderlands La Frontera*, 1987), A. Revathi and other hijra writers (*Our lives Our Words*, 2011), Hilton Als (*The Women*, 1996), Katherine McKittrick (*Demonic Grounds*, 2006), Kyla Pasha (*High Noon and the Body*, 2010), young people in the city whose poems are included by Nancy Larrick's (*I Heard a Scream in the Street* (1970), and Ghalib Shiraz Dhalla (*Ode to Lata*, 2002)

Autoethnography, or Saying Too Much

> *"Autoethnography – a method that uses personal experience with a culture and/or a cultural identity to make unfamiliar characteristics of the culture and/or identity familiar for insiders and outsiders."*
> Tony E. Adams and Stacy Homan Jones[170]

In anti-oppression workshops that I facilitate, I encourage participants to think about disrupting the oftentimes all too neat categories that a dominant culture maps onto our bodies. Introducing intersectionality (a concept developed and coined by Black feminist legal scholar Kimberlé Crenshaw in 1989[171]), I shift things for workshop participants and encourage moving away from a framework of competing struggles to an understanding of how systems and structures are deeply intertwined. Using intersectionality does not result in a neat picture though; it does not replace rigid categories with Venn diagrams. As Ann Garry states, intersectionality "does not abolish identity categories; instead they become more complex, messy, and fluid."[172] The messiness of my own identities (queer, diasporic, child of immigrants from 'south asia,'[173] settler of colour, survivor, etc.) is treated as such – uncertain and fluid – by authoethnography.[174] While methodological

---

[170] "Telling Stories: Reflexivity, Queer Theory, and Autoethnography" *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*, 11(2), page 110. The simplicity of an insider/outsider binary is troublesome for multiple reasons, but I posit that this relatively-common formulation of autoethnography is premised on a formulation that always relies on distance between reader and writer.

[171] "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics" *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140: 139-167.

[172] "Intersectionality, Metaphors, and the Multiplicity of Gender" *Hypatia* 26(4), 2011, page 83.

[173] I use this term in lower case and within quotation marks as part of a broader practice to destabilize certain identities assumed to have a stable relationship to nation-states. In the Canadian context, 'south asian' is a state-defined category used, for example, in the Census. This artificial grouping of otherwise disparate communities is troubling, and the grammatical intervention I attempt is to trouble this further.

[174] Adams and Jones.

choices are always deliberate, I am embarking on an autoethnographic journey with hesitation. Like Sophie Tamas, I wonder about how I am being positioned in this work and I wonder about the deep (and potentially vulnerable) intentions for surfacing narratives and poetry based on struggle.[175]

I come to the conclusion that this intervention (autoethnography) is the only kind of response I can make sense of, given the suffocations of the recent past. As a method, autoethnography disrupts the boundaries between private and public, harm and safety, as well as between theory and practice (so, leading to praxis), and researcher and researched. Self-reflexivity is a key component in autoethnography, and has itself been described as "terribly messy."[176] As a way of expanding the method (and the mess), I am doing *queer* autoethnographic work, paying particular attention to the intimacies, conceptualizations of community, and further troubling the mess of my queer life.

[175] Sophie Tamas, "Autoethnography, Ethics, and Making Your Baby Cry" *Cultural Studies – Critical Methodologies*, 11(3), 2011, 258-264.

[176] Ananya Roy, *City Requiem, Calcutta: Gender and the Politics of Poverty*, U of Minnesota Press, 2003, page 21.

stuff(ed)

what came first?
being told
      you are too much
or
filling every crevice with mementos, junk, reusable bags, and slips of paper?

gandh
sab phaila hua
saaf kar[177]

i stopped letting people in,
once the waters rose, and when unfinished sentences and unsent texts were the norm.
maintenance workers sashay across, and the ink of their proclamations hides
judgements
astonishments
disgust

my grandmothers would use meteorological language,
a storm whirls its way through the bedroom,
(rarely, the living room)
and i didn't understand that they were talking about me/us
a line of force,
      don't know how long
power in its whip
inducing anger, mostly irritation.
we impact
but i'm the type to damage
by moving things to the wrong places

i was born full (8 lbs) in any empty house,
no wonder i need to buy, keep, store, save, hold
we collapsed under second hand reams,
no one noticed how far we had accumulated

too much
never too much
always too much

---

[177] Translated as: dirt / everything is laying about / clean up

yes too much
no too much

The "Stuff" of Archives

In "The 'Stuff' of Archives," Martin Manalansan works to destabilize the archive in two ways: by expanding it to include the daily-ness of queer immigrant lives, and by positing a queer immigrant archive that contests normativities. This (re)articulation of the archive is grounded in an interdisciplinary approach, informed by post-colonial, feminist, phenomenological, queer and material culture studies, as well as affect theory. Focusing on queer and trans undocumented Asian and Latino immigrants in the gentrifying Jackson Heights neighbourhood (in New York City), and in particular, focusing on one household, Manalansan deploys an ethnographic approach in what is described as a "queer take on [Antoinette Burton's] 'dwelling in the archives.'"[178]

Through discussions with six immigrants (referred to as 'the Queer Six') residing in the one household and spending time within their living space, Manalansan explores categories, such as sexual identity, which is used "loosely and provisionally,"[179] so quite contrary to the rigidity of homonormative queerness. The materiality of the mess that greets Manalansan finds its traces in popular culture articulations of hoarding, and the trend of reality television shows focused on interventions, diagnostics (such as of hoarding) and fixing.

---

[178] *Dwelling in the Archive: Women Writing House, Home, and History in Late Colonial India*. Oxford University Press, 2003. Burton's focus is an examination of the role of the nation-state, and works to both point to the structure of national imaginaries that historians, post-colonial theorists and other scholars may refer to, and in fact, rely on, in their exploration of empire and imperialism. Manalansan does not stabilize the nation-state in "The Stuff of Archives" but motions towards the institutions (including forms and paperwork) of the nation through a focus on undocumented immigrants.

[179] Page 95

Shifting from mess as an outcome or a material reality, to messing as in an action, Manalansan, draws deep connections between mess and queer in ways that are intended to trouble mainstream queer studies (and queer scholars, perhaps). The discomfort elicited can be similar to the discomfort of entering a 'hoarders' home, watching fashion experts review a woman who dresses masculine, or in reading the news about a celebrity who is in the middle of a public breakdown. These public cultural productions frame specific articulations of mess, Manalansan suggests that mess can be more than sorrow and negativity, and in fact can point to "moments of vitality, pleasure and fabulousness."[180]

Through conversations about the materiality of items in the household (such as a set of melamine dishes found and kept by Natalie, one of the Queer Six), Manalansan shows that the Queer Six disrupt the normalizing discourses by their complex detachment from or with materials kept in the apartment, which is predicated on their experiences as undocumented immigrants for whom "loss, failure and abandonment [are] almost a routine."[181] Focusing on the life of the Queer Six – including the ordinary and daily – Manalansan suggests that they form a living archive that enables new conceptualizations of the archive, of queerness and of immigration.[182]

This expansive understanding of the archive, and compelling use of mess in the context of a politically charged approach to queer archives, encourages me to (re)visit my own articulations of mess, messiness, shame, disgust and comprehensiveness. I turn now to my own deployments of mess.

---

[180] Page 100
[181] Page 102
[182] 105

Analysing the Mess

It is somewhat surprising and almost ironic that my graduate work is focused on archival work, given my inclination towards the uncategorized, the untidy and the excessive. This binary makes me want to juxtapose the neatness of the archive with the disarray in my study at home, which has steadily been getting worse since 2014. In the summer of 2015, I share this framing with a small group of fellow students (not from within my program) and one of the pieces of feedback is about the allure of a physical juxtaposition - photographs of the mess, for example. I instantly feel shame at the possibility of my mess being *actually* seen, as I anticipate judgement, shock and disgust (I think about Manalansan's visceral reaction to the Queer Six's apartment), and begin thinking about ways to capture some representation of the mess without the materiality. Can I stage a photograph? Should I teach myself how to draw and make a painting? Why was my original proposal to write poetry about it, not enough?

The juxtaposition of neat (archive) and mess (my home) becomes fuzzy, as I visit two diametrically-opposed archives in Toronto: the Clara Scott Archives at York University and the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives (CLGA) to research the *Desh Pardesh* festival. I notice something placed in the wrong folder at the Clara Scott Archives, but the junior staff member is not alarmed by this when I mention it, perhaps because they have little connection to the curation (which is often the domain of senior staff). Scribbles on the back of meeting minutes disrupt my un-articulated expectations. The folder I begin with at the CLGA mostly has newspaper clippings, and I wonder about contemporary and future archives when no one gets the paper delivered anymore.

The messiness at home is not just about printing articles that will assist me in developing my portfolio for my Master's degree. A steady decline in my organization occurs – with 'organization' taking on a double meaning. My workplace of almost five years has a shift in management structure; my inability to keep the kitchen clean, and a fridge that stays full of rotting food. Few options for delivery, grocery stores that are just a little too far away, and insomnia mean that my already-disordered eating gets worse, while the little food I do bring home stays unfinished and spoils. There is a particularly low point in the winter of 2014-2015 as I am targeted at work for raising issues of racism, homophobia and transphobia by the management (who do not, and have never, included any racialized people) While there is visible support for a new initiative facilitated by a non-racialized staff member, there is silence about $10,000 in funding I acquired for queer and trans programming. The stress accumulates in my body, with nausea and pain becoming regular occurrences. Most of my colleagues, and the staff who report to me, are queer and trans people of colour – we whisper in closed offices, trying to strategize against increasing hostility. We are not unionized, but some of us have permanent jobs, and we try to respond to management as a team. The attention on me is focused, and the Executive Director facilitates a meeting where I express fear about reprisal – he promises there will be none.

Then I lose my job.

More than nine months of mostly staying at home, in bed, means that the sites for my analysis grow significantly. I could photograph the bedroom with its non-existent pathway; I could describe through poetry the clutter of make-up on the bathroom counter, that lays untouched since I rarely see anyone; I could theorize the meanings of

being hungry while not buying groceries for five months. I do none of this, though. This mess – the sites of analysis become tombs, markers in a place between life and death that characterize too many queer people of colour responding to nationalist discourse that privileges silence, tolerance and staying inside the lines.

Analysing with Mess

Gathering notes about *Desh Pardesh* in different notebooks means I have trouble finding what I want to say. I become accustomed to silence, except for hurt-angry conversations about how I wish things would happen on my own terms. The notes join articles printed and only half-read, text messages where friends ask me what exactly I am doing for my graduate work, and the feeling of fear that I will not be able to do this work 'properly' once these friends respond with excitement. The discourses of queer diasporic femme Toronto life in the almost-suburbs is made up of these. But, the discourses also include my frustration about how the 'south asian' stage at Pride Toronto I have voluntarily programmed for 5 years[183] is both visible and invisible (and the traces of performances that got cancelled), a small program positioned against a large Bollywood party[184] – the former erased from all news releases and social media. I keep looking at the words, questions, egos, laughter, memory – the mess of it all surfaces, repeatedly.

I am analyzing the texts of my life, and in this analysis, a code emerges: mess. This is the first time identifying a code (mess) disappears the discourse. The 'stuff'' of

---

[183] Called *brOWN//out*
[184] Called *Bend it like Bombay*

the queer diasporic femme almost-suburban life recedes, and the code (mess) remains the only word in the metaphorical transcripts, in the analysis, in the discussion.

Disciplinary Mess

I tell people that my Masters work is focused on a queer arts festival from the 1990s and people are surprised it is Environmental Studies. The disciplinary nature of post-secondary education works to discipline those who dare cross those boundaries, and I work to find a succinct answer to how my work 'fits.' Social movement, or activism. Analysing the space of the city, especially those places that do not exist anymore, like the Euclid Theatre which is now a Starbucks – "gross," someone says but I know that they love having work dates at various Starbucks locations in west Toronto.

This work disrupts Environmental Studies (at York, and elsewhere), and my reluctance of being cast into the bureaucracies of the program prove disruptive to others (and myself). The online forms, 'submit' buttons and institutional tracking remind me of writing grants (or other administrative tasks) at the workplace I still cry over, and I am repulsed, doubly. First by the prerequisite acts of engaging with a system that is designed to create confusion through its discreteness; secondly by my deep difficulty in complying with the institutional diversions. Maybe if I try harder, I can be less messy, less sad, less in pain. Would it have been better if I had just gone along with things?

I am not the only one doing this kind of work – there is a localized historic turn for queer and trans communities, and funded history projects emerge including ones from formal arts institutions. I talk less about *Desh Pardesh* once I realize the other work (by the South Asian Visual Arts Centre, SAVAC) will automatically be more well-received,

given its framing (packaging) and institutional backing. Formally trained artists become faces for the 'new' historical work, and I remember how social capital mingles with access to funding and makes Toronto feel small. My insecurity boils over, and I begin repeating to myself that I wish I was not such a mess.

I realize that timelines, histories, chronologies and neat and short descriptions of what has happened (in order) are not what I want anymore. Manalansan says

> "mess is a way into a queering of the archive that involves not a cleaning up but rather a spoiling and cluttering of the neat normative configurations and patterns that seek to calcify lives and experiences."[185]

And I am no longer interested in developing/writing history, however hesitant. I want to trace my fingers across a moving body – that is the intimacy I want to build with a queer diasporic archive that is so much more than *Desh Pardesh*. This queer diasporic archive is becoming one that includes me.

---

[185] Page 99

forgetting that you had something, like forgetting you had done something

One of those times I rushed to push secrets and scribbles under the bed
my hand snagged on the edge of something
subtle
half-alive
a shadow of the version of me i had put someplace for safe-keeping.

chay,[186]
trips in the grey dust
embraced by posters from that summer in Toronto
by pens I set aside so I could buy refills
by notebooks too precious to use, and me too selfish to give away

the edges of a shadow glisten with disquiet
slow breath
stifled cough/ahem/sob
wait until the sun no longer glares over dusty tanks and jeeps
(canada's first national urban park)

phone rings and rings and doesn't give up,
peterborough, mississauga, north york, new delhi, kullu
i saw you at the airport
i didn't want to worry you/the funeral is tomorrow
did you eat?
did you eat?
do you pray?

the coolness of a lie (un)told, hanging out
not a skirt-lifting woosh, nor a hair-messing gust
but a stale cold, solid, waiting
a *chay* against heavy bookshelves filled with heavy books

a spot in the center that spreads
a grey that grows
file it away
      for
      now.

---

[186] Translated as shadow

STORAGE

The journey of (un)mapping queer and trans 'south asian' community organizing has resulted in significant surges – buzzing activity as connections are made amongst seemingly-disparate activism; a growing number of texts (increasing the queer diasporic archive); and simply, more 'stuff' or more mess. With new fascination and distrust of those who store, acquire or hold on to 'stuff',[187] *STORAGE* is a mixed-media art collection that could be extricated from, or placed into, places of mess or waste. *STORAGE* consists of mixed media on canvas (Glam/Sorrow, saving, and Hoard) and comic (Surviving the Archives). Responding to the three large themes of the broader portfolio (archives, queer and trans 'south asian' organizing, and mess), *STORAGE* utilizes found art and collage as its principles.

Considering Urvashi Butalia's exploration of the history of trauma, and in particular her intentional search for the affective, as well as the indefinable,[188] *STORAGE* seeks to surface the uncomfortable, the ugly, the muddled, and the sad – that is, it seeks to shift the frame to focus on those items that are fall into the cracks, both visible and invisible.

This work is simultaneously influenced by: performances that get cancelled; papers left unfiled; Hoarding: Buried Alive and Extreme Couponing;[189] and the smoothness of acrylic chairs in a library.

---

[187] For an insightful discussion about "stuff" consider Martin Manalansan's "The Stuff of Archives" *Radical History Review¸* 2014

[188] *The Other Side of Silence: Voices from the Partition of India*, page 277

[189] Both television shows on TLC, an American lifestyle television channel

STORAGE consists of the following creative pieces:

Glam/Sorrow

Chronic depression, Post Traumatic Stress Disorder and sudden job loss for a queer of colour (sometimes-femme) in an institutionally-mediated sub/urban world means for that sorrow takes particular forms. "If I look great, it's either I feel awful…or I feel good."
mixed media on canvas

saving

Technological advances mean that we can save either more or less.
mixed media on canvas

Hoard

Found art that curates from the domestic? Sounds messy.
mixed media on canvas

Surviving the Archives

Take it from someone who (perhaps) knows – getting to the institutional archives and surviving can be tricky. Wishing you no paper cuts.
comic: marker on mural paper (photographed)

Photograph of Glam/Sorrow

Glam / sorrow

I have no duty (dharma),

nor any belongings,

nor any desire (kāma),

nor even liberation (mokṣha).

Hoard

Created by: Anu Radha Verma (November, 2015)
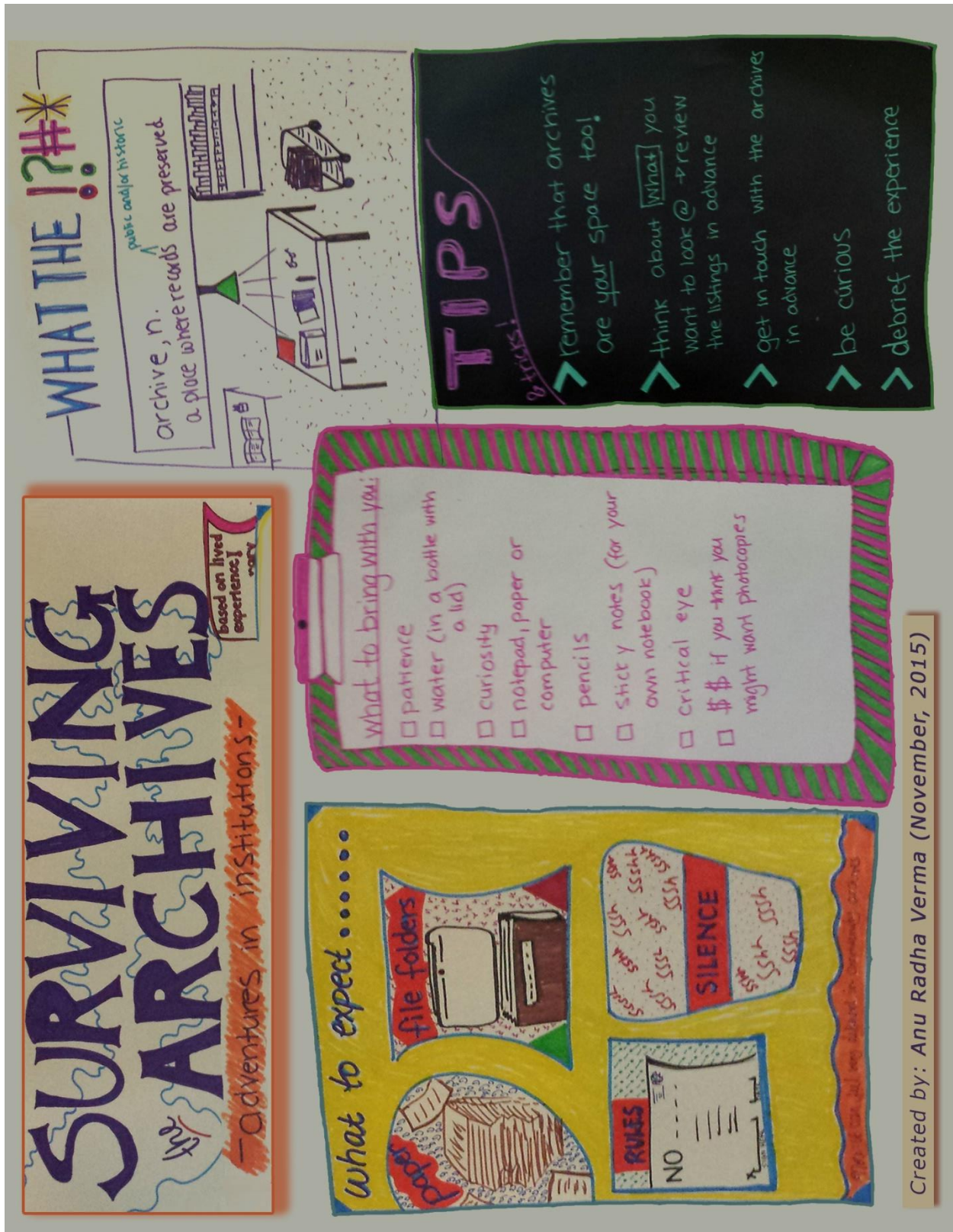
Bibliography

Ahmed, Sara. *On Being Included: Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2012.

AIDS Activist History Project – Toronto Interviews
http://www.aidsactivisthistory.ca/toronto-interviews.html

Alessa, Lilian (Naia) et. Al "Social-ecological hotspots mapping: A spatial approach for identifying coupled social-ecological space" Landscape and Urban Planning, 85, 2008, 27-39[AK1]

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention. "About".
http://asaap.ca/about1/

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention. Brown Like Me. 2009.

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention. "Protect Your Love" posted June 27, 2012
http://www.mybindi.com/protect-your-love-asaap/

Anderson, Jason. "Hotter Docs onscreen at Toronto's Inside Out festival". *The Toronto Star*, May 23, 2013
http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/movies/2013/05/23/continental_one_of_many_fine_documentaries_at_torontos_inside_out.html

Aune, Kristin. "Feminist ethnography." In *Encyclopedia of gender and society*, edited by J. O'Brien, 309-319. Thousand Oaks, CA: SAGE, 2009.

Bhattacharya, Sabyasachi, "History from Below," *Social Scientist*, 11 (4), 1983.

Black, Simon. "A People's History of the Yonge Street Rebellion." *Simon Black* (blog), May 4, 2015.
http://simonblack.org/pages/2015/05/04/a-peoples-history-of-the-yonge-street-rebellion/

BlogTO. "House of the week: Movie House Lofts (394 Euclid Ave)." *BlogTO*, September 24, 2013.
http://www.blogto.com/city/2013/09/house_of_the_week_movie_house_lofts_394_euclid_ave/

Buckner, Dianne. "Mongrel Media CEO turns passion for film into box office successes" *CBC News*, October 4, 2012.
http://www.cbc.ca/news/business/mongrel-media-ceo-turns-passion-for-film-into-box-office-successes-1.1292369

Bynoe, Holly. "Khush: A Show of Love." *ARC Magazine*, July 26, 2011.
http://arcthemagazine.com/arc/2011/07/khush-a-show-of-love/

Byrd, Jodi A. *The Transit of Empire: Indigenous Critiques of Colonialism*. Minneapolis: U of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Cleli. "Pages Bookstore to Close August 31". *Open Book Toronto*, July 10, 2009. http://www.openbooktoronto.com/news/pages_bookstore_close_august_31

Cho, Sumi, Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams, and Leslie McCall. "Toward a Field of Intersectionality Studies: Theory, Applications, and Praxis." *Signs* 38.4 (Summer 2013): 785-810.

Churchill, David. S. "Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at The Body Politic." *Left History* 28, no. 2 (2003): 114-134.

Cook, Terry, and Joan M. Schwartz. "Archives, records, and power: from (postmodern) theory to (archival) performance." *Archival Science* 2, no. 3-4 (2002): 171-185.

Crenshaw, Kimberlé Williams. "Demarginalizing the Intersection of Race and Sex: A Black Feminist Critique of Antidiscrimination Doctrine, Feminist Theory and Antiracist Politics." *University of Chicago Legal Forum* 140 (1989): 139-167.

Critical Approaches to South Asian Studies Workshop schedule 2014 https://casasw2014.wordpress.com/casasw-schedule/ [AK2]

Dave, Naisargi N. *Queer Activism in India: A Story in the Anthropology of Ethics*, Duke U P, 2012.

DeMara, Bruce. "Toronto Women's Bookstore closing after 39 years." *The Toronto Star*, October 9, 2012. http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2012/10/09/toronto_womens_bookstore_closing_after_39_years.html

Doucette, Chris and Maryam Shah. "Hunt for leads continues for three missing men from Church-Wellesley Village." *Toronto Sun*, June 8, 2013. http://www.torontosun.com/2013/06/07/hunt-for-leads-continues-for-three-missing-men

Drabinski, Emily. "Queering the catalog: Queer theory and the politics of correction." *The Library* 83, no. 2 (2013).

Eng, David L., & Hom, Alice Y. Q & A: Queer in Asian America. 1998.

Fernandez, Sharon, "More Than Just an Arts Festival: Communities, Resistance, and the Story of Desh Pardesh." *Canadian Journal of Communication* 31, no. 1 (2006).

Flack, Derek "This Ain't the Rosedale Library". *BlogTO*, February 3, 2010. http://www.blogto.com/bookstores/this-aint-the-rosedale-library

Friday Night Productions. *Re-writing the Script: A Love Letter to Our Families*. Toronto: Friday Night Productions, 2001. DVD.

Richard, Fung. "Conference Calls: Race as Special Event." Take One: Film and Television in Canada, no. 5, (Summer 1994). http://takeone.athabascau.ca/index.php/takeone/article/viewFile/101/95

Garry, Ann. "Intersectionality, Metaphors, and the Multiplicity of Gender." *Hypatia* 26, no. 4 (2011): page 83.

Gopinath, Gayatri. *Impossible Desires: Queer Diasporas and South Asian Public Cultures*. Duke University Press, 2005.

Handhardt, Christina B. *Safe Space: Gay Neighbourhood History and the Politics of Violence*. Durham: Duke University Press. 2013.

Hamilton, Kendar. "Queer Film at Home: A Deep Look into Inside Out." *Fine Cut*, March 21, 2014. http://humberjournalism.com/finecut2014/2014/03/21/inside-out/

Haritaworn, Jin. *Queer Lovers and Hateful Others: Regenerating Violent Times and Places*. London: Pluto Press, 2015.

Hoang, Andrea. "Toronto Women's Bookstore in Danger of Closing." *Shameless magazine*, December 17, 2009. http://shamelessmag.com/blog/entry/toronto-womens-bookstore-in-danger-of-closing

Howlett, Karen. "Toronto's This Ain't the Rosedale Library bookstore at risk of closing." *The Globe and Mail*, June 20, 2010. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/torontos-this-aint-the-rosedale-library-bookstore-at-risk-of-closing/article4189849/

James, Rachel Kalpana. "From Foreign Shore." *Art India* 9, no. 1 (2004).

Kauldher, Amrita. "Situating 'Sikh' Diasporic Dubs." Presentation on Prezi, February 2, 2015. https://prezi.com/15czat3s3if4/situating-sikh-diasporic-dubs/

Kauldher, Amrita. "Sikh Beats and Burdens on Repeat: Reformings of Bodies and borders." Abstracts of 7th Annual Ethnic and Pluralism Studies Graduate Research Conference, University of Toronto. http://munkschool.utoronto.ca/ethnicstudies/files/2013/09/FINAL_EPS_-Conference_-Abstracts1.pdf

Korducki, Kelli. "Toronto Women's Bookstore is Closing for Good." *Torontoist*, October 9, 2012. http://torontoist.com/2012/10/toronto-womens-bookstore-is-closing-for-good/

Korducki, Kelli. "The Toronto women's Bookstore closure is a comment on the book industry, but also on the changing face of the feminist community." *The National Post*, November 24, 2012. http://news.nationalpost.com/posted-toronto/the-toronto-womens-bookstore-closure-is-a-comment-on-the-book-industry-but-also-on-the-changing-face-of-the-feminist-community

Khush South Asian Gay Men of Toronto. Khush Kahayal. 1989-1997 archived at the Canadian Lesbian and Gay Archives, Toronto.

Lawrence, Bonita. *Fractured Homeland: Federal Recognition and Algonquin Identity in Ontario*. UBC Press, 2012.

Livingston, Andrew. "Toronto police link three missing persons' cases in Gay Village." *Toronto Star*, June 6, 2013. http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/06/06/toronto_police_link_three_missing_persons_cases_in_gay_village.html

MacKey, Eva. *The House of Difference: Cultural Politics and National Identity*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press. 2002.

Mani, Bakirathi. "Destination Culture: A Critical Look at South Asian Arts and Activism Festivals in North America." *SAMAR*, Issue 14. http://samarmagazine.org/archive/articles/47

Manoff, Marlene. "Theories of the Archive from Across the Discipline." *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4, no. 1 (2004): 9-25.

Marchessault, Janine "Of Bicycles and Films: The Case of CineCycle." *Public* 40 (2009). http://www.publicjournal.ca/wp-content/uploads/2011/01/Marchessault_PUBLICIssue40.pdf

McKittrick, Katherine. *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle*. Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2006.

Minh-ha, Trinh T. "Framer Framed." Keynote address at Museum Malaku, 2009. http://vimeo.com/6765153

Mongrel Media. "Our Team". http://www.mongrelmedia.com/about-us/team.aspx

Narayan, Uma. *Dislocating Culture: Identities, Traditions and Third-World Feminism*. New York: Rutgers Press. 1997.

Pages Unbound. "History".

http://www.pages-unbound.com/about/history.html

Parker, John N. and Edward J. Hackett. "Hot Spots and Hot Moments in Scientific Collaborations and Social Movements." *American Sociological Review* 77, no. 1 (2012): 21-44.

Petz, Sarah "Police investigating link between three missing men who frequented Toronto's gay village" The National Post, June 6, 2013 http://news.nationalpost.com/news/police-investigating-possible-link-between-three-missing-men

Piepznsa-Samarasinha, Leah Lakshmi. "Artists, Rebels, Warriors: Desh Pardesh's Legacy and the Future of Radical South Asian Art." *Fuse Magazine* 27, no. 4 (2004).

Pillow, Wanda S, and Cris Mayo. "Feminist Ethnography: Histories, Challenges, and Possibilities." In *The Handbook of Feminist Research: Theory and Praxis*, 2nd ed, edited by Sharlene Nagy Hesse-Biber, 187-205. Los Angeles: SAGE, 2012.

Puar, Jasbir K. *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2007.

Puar, Jasbir et. al."Q&A with Jasbir Puar." *Darkmatter: In the Ruins of Imperial Culture* 3 (2008). http://www.darkmatter101.org/site/category/journal/issues/3-post-colonial-sexuality/

Rao, Rahul. "Queer Questions." *International Feminist Journal of Politics* 16, no. 2 (2014) 199-217.

Razack, Sherene H, ed. *Race, Space and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society*. Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002.

Reassemblage. Dir. Trinh T. Minh-ha. Co-produced by Jean-Paul Bourdier. 1982.

Saranillio, Dean Itsuji. "Why Asian settler colonialism matters: a thought piece on critiques, debates, and Indigenous difference." *Settler Colonial Studies* 3, no. 3-4 (2013): 280-294.

Sarpong, Jon. "T.O.'s summer sizzle continues with Festival of South Asia". *Inside Toronto*, August 21, 2008. http://www.insidetoronto.com/news-story/26721-t-o-s-summer-sizzle-continues-with-festival-of-south-asia/

Schechter, Fran et. al. "Mapping Queer Toronto." *NOW Toronto* https://nowtoronto.com/lifestyle/features/mapping-queer-toronto/

Seedat, Mohamed. "Oral History as an Enactment of Critical Community Psychology" *Journal of Community Psychology*, 43(1), 2015, 22-35.

Sheffield, Rebecca Taves. "The Beside Table Archives: Archive Intervention and Lesbian Intimate Domestic Culture" *Radical History Review*, 120, (2014).

Shotwell, Alexis. "Open Normativities: Gender, Disability, and Collective Political Change." *Signs: Journal of Women in Culture and Society* 37, no. 4 (2012).

Singh, Kartikeya. "Business innovation and diffusion of off-grid solar technologies in India." *Energy for Sustainable Development* 30 (2016): 1-13.

Smith, Andrea. *Conquest: Sexual Violence and American Indian Genocide*. Cambridge, MA: South End Press, 2005.

Smith, Andrea. "Queer Theory and Native Studies: The Heteronormativity of Settler Colonialism." *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies* 16, no. 1-2 (2010): 42-68.

Smith, Andrea. "The Problem with 'Privilege'." *Andrea Smith's blog*, August 14, 2013. https://andrea366.wordpress.com/2013/08/14/the-problem-with-privilege-by-andrea-smith/

Stoler, Ann Laura. *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense*. Princeton University Press. 2009.

The Eye Opener. "Former CKLN DJ Brings the Funk." October 9, 2002 http://www.theeyeopener.com/really-old-archives/index.php?page=445

Thobani, Sunera. *Exalted Subjects: Studies in the Making of Race and Nation in Canada*. Toronto: U of Toronto Press, 2007.

Todd, Zoe. "For Immediate Release -#ReadTheTRCReport". *Urbane Adventurer: Amiskwacî* (blog). September 15, 2015. https://zoeandthecity.wordpress.com/2015/09/15/for-immediate-release-readthetrcreport

Urbaneer. "My College Crush in Italy." http://www.urbaneer.com/listings/my_college_crush_in_little_italys_movie_house

Veracini, Lorenzo. *Settler Colonialism: A Theoretical Overview*. Palgrave MacMillan, 2010.

Veracini, Lorenzo. "Introducing: Settler Colonials Studies." *Settler Colonial Studies* 1, no. 1 (2011): 1-12.

Voss, Paul. J. and Mara L. Werner. "Towards a Poetics of the Archive: Introduction". *Studies in the Literary Imagination* 32, no. 1 (1999):

Wiart, Nikki. "Crowd-sourced video project aims to make TRC report more accessible." *CBC news*, June 24, 2015. http://www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/crowd-sourced-video-project-aims-to-make-trc-report-more-accessible-1.3123525

Warner, Tom. *Never Going Back: A History of Queer Activism in Canada*. University of Toronto Press, 2002.

Wikipedia. "Timeline of South Asian and Diasporic LGBT History". https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Timeline_of_South_Asian_and_diasporic_LGBT_history

Wolfe, Patrick. "Settler Colonialism and the Elimination of the Native." *Journal of Genocide Research* 8, no. 4, 2006: 387-409.

White, Madeleine. "Home of the Week: $250,000 Reno makes Euclid Loft Dazzle." *The Globe and Mail*, April 16, 2015. http://www.theglobeandmail.com/life/home-and-garden/real-estate/home-of-the-week-250000-reno-makes-euclid-loft-dazzle/article23994657/

Xtra. "Festival of riches." Xtra, March 29, 2006. http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/news-and-ideas/news/festival-riches-11401

Xtra. "Inside Out without a home". *Xtra*, January 18, 2006 http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/arts-and-entertainment/inside-without-home-11715

Xtra. "Lived & learned." *Xtra*, June 21, 2006. http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/news-and-ideas/news/lived-and-learned-11122

Xtra. "Piecing together the storing of three missing men from Toronto's gay village." Xtra, June 8, 2013. http://www.dailyxtra.com/canada/news-and-ideas/news/piecing-together-the-story-three-missing-men-from-torontos-gay-village-61654

Xtra. "Police investigating disappearance of three men from gay village." Xtra, June 6, 2013. http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/news-and-ideas/news/police-investigating-disappearance-three-men-from-gay-village-61672

Xtra. "The Tops in Arts". Xtra, December 25, 2002. http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/the-tops-in-arts-55808

Todd, Zoe, "For Immediate Release -#ReadTheTRCReport" September 15, 2015, personal blog
https://zoeandthecity.wordpress.com/2015/09/15/for-immediate-release-readthetrcreport[AK3]

Wiart, Nikki, "Crowd-sourced video project aims to make TRC report more accessible" CBC news, june 24, 2015
www.cbc.ca/news/aboriginal/crowd-sourced-video-project-aims-to-make-trc-report-more-accessible-1.3123525

Howlett Karen "Toronto's This Ain't the Rosedale Library bookstore at risk of closing" The Globe and Mail, June 20, 2010
http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/toronto/torontos-this-aint-the-rosedale-library-bookstore-at-risk-of-closing/article4189849/

Flack, Derek "This Ain't the Rosedale Library" February 3, 2010, BlogTO
http://www.blogto.com/bookstores/this-aint-the-rosedale-library

Hoang, Andrea "Toronto Women's Bookstore in Danger of Closing" shameless, December 17, 2009
http://shamelessmag.com/blog/entry/toronto-womens-bookstore-in-danger-of-closing

Korducki, Kelli "Toronto Women's Bookstore is Closing for Good" Torontoist, October 9, 2012
http://torontoist.com/2012/10/toronto-womens-bookstore-is-closing-for-good/

Korducki, Kelli "The Toronto women's Bookstore closure is a comment on the book industry, but also on the changing face of the feminist community" The National Post, November 24, 2012
http://news.nationalpost.com/posted-toronto/the-toronto-womens-bookstore-closure-is-a-comment-on-the-book-industry-but-also-on-the-changing-face-of-the-feminist-community

DeMara, Bruce "Toronto Women's Bookstore closing after 39 years" The Toronto Star, October 9, 2012
http://www.thestar.com/entertainment/2012/10/09/toronto_womens_bookstore_closing_after_39_years.html

Kauldher,Kauldher "Situating 'Sikh' Diasporic Dubs" presentation, February 2, 2015
https://prezi.com/15czat3s3if4/situating-sikh-diasporic-dubs/

Kauldher, Amrita "Sikh Beats and Burdens on Repeat: Reformings of Bodies and borders" Munk school conference abstract
http://munkschool.utoronto.ca/ethnicstudies/files/2013/09/FINAL_EPS_-Conference_-Abstracts1.pdf

Critical Approaches to South Asian Studies Workshop schedule 2014
https://casasw2014.wordpress.com/casasw-schedule/

Churchill, David. S. "Personal Ad Politics: Race, Sexuality and Power at The Body Politic" Left History 28(2), 2003, 114-134

Voss, Paul. J. and Mara L. Werner "Towards a Poetics of the Archive: Introduction" Studies in the Literary Imagination, 32(1), 1999. PAGE??
Xtra, "Lived & learned," June 21, 2006
http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/news-and-ideas/news/lived-and-learned-11122

Xtra, "Festival of riches", March 29, 2006
http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/news-and-ideas/news/festival-riches-11401

Xtra, "The Tops in Arts," December 25, 2002
http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/the-tops-in-arts-55808

Sarpong, Jon "T.O.'s summer sizzle continues with Festival of South Asia" Inside Toronto, August 21, 2008
http://www.insidetoronto.com/news-story/26721-t-o-s-summer-sizzle-continues-with-festival-of-south-asia/

The Eye Opener, "Former CKLN DJ Brings the Funk" October 9, 2002
http://www.theeyeopener.com/really-old-archives/index.php?page=445

Alliance for South Asian AIDS Prevention, "Protect Your Love" posted June 27, 2012
http://www.mybindi.com/protect-your-love-asaap/

Ahmed, Sara. On Being Included : Racism and Diversity in Institutional Life. Durham, NC, USA: Duke University Press, 2012

Xtra "Piecing together the storing of three missing men from Toronto's gay village" June 8, 2013
http://www.dailyxtra.com/canada/news-and-ideas/news/piecing-together-the-story-three-missing-men-from-torontos-gay-village-61654

Petz, Sarah "Police investigating link between three missing men who frequentd Toronto's gay village" The National Post, June 6, 2013
http://news.nationalpost.com/news/police-investigating-possible-link-between-three-missing-men

Livingston, Andrew "Toronto police link three missing persons' cases in Gay Village" Toronto Star June 6, 2013
http://www.thestar.com/news/gta/2013/06/06/toronto_police_link_three_missing_persons_cases_in_gay_village.html

Doucette, Chris and Maryam Shah, "Hunt for leads continues for three missing men from Church-Wellesley Village" Toronto Sun June 8, 2013
http://www.torontosun.com/2013/06/07/hunt-for-leads-continues-for-three-missing-men

Xtra "Police investigating disappearance of three men from gay village" June 6, 2013
http://www.dailyxtra.com/toronto/news-and-ideas/news/police-investigating-disappearance-three-men-from-gay-village-61672