

**JAMAICAN DIASPORIC COUNTER-ARCHIVES:
PERFORMATIVE ARCHIVAL IMAGININGS
IN ONTARIO, CANADA**

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ABSTRACT

The colonial foundation of institutional archives in this place called Canada preserved records that narrated the nation as White, patriarchal, and capitalist. In this context, scribal and audiovisual records made by the elite were prioritized. The marginalization of Indigenous peoples, Black peoples, and other racialized peoples in society is well documented by the absence of governmental records, diaries, newspaper clippings, and analogue and digital media made by people from these communities. What documents do exist overwhelmingly preserve and reinforce harmful accounts from this colonial perspective. The central inquiry in this dissertation is how archival practices might challenge colonial frameworks and architectures. Drawing parallels between Indigenous definitions of “archives” and their methods of historical preservation, and the methods used by Jamaicans who descend primarily from indigenous peoples in Africa, this research-creation project asks an ontological question: What are archives (the records) in the Jamaican diaspora in Canada? Noting the performative nature of the community’s records, I ask further: What is an archives (repository) of the Jamaican diaspora—its architecture and its functional role? Anchored by critical archival frameworks and a Black feminist lens, I engage in Caribbean-inflected participatory research-creation to develop a counter-archive of Jamaican Canadians in Ontario, Canada. The research process integrates traditional archival research, interviews informed by Caribbean “liming and ole talk” and “groundings” practices, and the (re)use of audiovisual media through remediation and process cinema.

The resulting archive includes both material and embodied forms of knowledge—stories, gestures, songs, and other expressions of cultural memory, all of which were digitized and made accessible through a media sculpture, *NansiRoachy*, which functions as the architectural support and organizational repository for these records. The artistic treatment of these media archives underscores the importance of incorporating art and aesthetics within the Jamaican/Black Caribbean embodied archive since it fosters a restorative, healing process. This research advances a Black archival practice that

acknowledges the performative, embodied, mobile, community-oriented, and digital nature of these records, attributes which shape the repository that supports them. Finally, I advocate for the unsettling of colonial concepts of property and geographically fixed institutions by designing an adaptable, mobile, and vernacular architecture that can travel to different community locations to facilitate the sharing and augmentation of these records within the spaces of the communities they represent.

DEDICATION

I dedicate this dissertation to my children, Alessandra, Lukas, Eric, and Carsten. This research was always with you in mind.

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LEGEND OF ABBREVIATIONS

DCCBA: Dufferin County Canadian Black Association

JCA: Jamaican Canadian Association

HSC: Heritage Singers Canada

CTASC: Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections

LAC: Library and Archives Canada

CBC: Canadian Broadcasting Corporation

PREAMBLE AND POSITIONALITY

My body and my positionality situate me as an Afro-Chinese Jamaican naturalized in Canada who phenotypically does not present as either Black or Chinese. These identifiers locate me within a specific history of transatlantic slavery and indentureship in the Caribbean. I recognize that lighter skin—be it Black or Chinese—accrues privileges based on skin tone, regardless of the level of poverty or wealth in the community. Growing up, one is taught, often indirectly, to be ashamed of one’s Blackness—in school, but also in the home and broader society. Regardless of my (lack of) phenotype, my lived experience is one of anti-Blackness, and—more rarely—anti-Asianness. I am keenly aware that my presence challenges preconceived notions of what “Jamaican” is, what Blackness is, and what Asianness is. My positionality is further shaped by precarity within the “middle-class” stratus. My lived experience has shown me class definitions shift with economic realities, formal educational levels, and sociopolitical geographies.

As a visual way to position myself in the research, I hereby include a wedding photograph of my parents taken in 1969 depicting my Black, light-skinned father and my Hakka Chinese mother, who has a Black matrilineage. While on the surface they are an embodiment of the Jamaican national motto, Out of Many One People, their marriage was always already transgressive, both at the level of the family and societal apparatuses.¹ Their marriage occurred at a time when the old wound of racial hierarchies entrenched preexisting fissures of colourism in the newly independent nation, one which privileged people of higher formal education and/or lighter pigmentation, including those of Chinese heritage, in opposition to a darker-toned underclass. My parents migrated to Canada and the US in the 1970s to a White-dominated society with arguably clearer racial boundaries; they would experience an even greater divide between Black Jamaicans and Chinese Jamaicans in Canada.



Figure 1 Photograph of Jerry Ebanks, my Black but light-skinned father, and Myrna Ebanks, my Chinese mother. Wedding Day, January 4, 1969.

PREFACE

This is a research-creation dissertation with scaffolding components. The first is a written dissertation with five chapters outlining the scholarly and institutional context of Jamaican diasporic archives in Ontario and includes appendices. Embedded in the written component of the dissertation are photographs and hyperlinks to video documentation of the research, as well as newly created videos embodying the methodology. The methodology is discussed in the fourth chapter of the monograph and links the textual component to the research-creation process. This process is threefold: The first step consists of Caribbean participatory and discursive methods to engage community members. A second method is process cinema, which includes analogue filming, making phytograms, and hand-processing film. Other image-making approaches such as video recording and digitizing were integrated into the process. The elements culminate in the third component, the figure of *NansiRoachy*, a shapeshifting media sculpture and installation that proposes an architectural and procedural model for Black archives based on the embodied records of members of the Jamaican diaspora in Ontario.



Figure 2 *NansiRoachy*, 2025.

The architecture embodies the relations built within the community during the collection of their immaterial and material archives. These relational aspects are constitutive of the work since it is my own embodiment of the stories and records collected in the fieldwork that shifted my initial formal conceptions of the installation. Sylvia Wynter asks, “What can aesthetics do?” This question directed the form and aesthetic of the installation from one that would have a more direct conversation with contemporary art to one that materialized out of the community’s records. Based on the Akan-Ashanti figure of Anansi, *NansiRoachy*, depicted in figure 2 above, consists of two wooden carts with casters made with dimensional lumber and scrap pieces of wood. The carts support a sound system made of used analogue speakers, the kind found in basements and living rooms, signalling domesticity and home. The carts also carry an amplifier, multichannel receiver, audio interface, and laptop or media player from which the projections and speakers are played. Spider legs made with industrial aluminum profiles stretch out from the middle core and support a series of monitors playing the media archives of the participants, the audio of which can be accessed via headphones or from the monitor speakers. *NansiRoachy* displays six monitors at various heights but can display up to sixteen monitors. Headphones are provided to listen to the audio, which creates another soundscape as the main audio from the speakers fades into background noise. Documentation of the installation can be viewed at this [link](#).

The steel barrels further reference the transport of household goods between Canada and Jamaica, as well as the jerk barbecues that proliferate throughout the diaspora and on the island. At first, I considered fibre barrels, but their underwhelming taupe colour, along with their less structurally imposing material, steered me towards using the metal barrels. Finding metal barbecues that referenced colours meaningful to Jamaicans harmonized with the colours I had already painted the carts and the speakers. The colours—the black, green, and gold of the Jamaican flag, and the red, gold, and green of Rastafari—along with the barrels that shipped items between Canada and Jamaica and the painted airline galley cart container, embody a sense of diasporic being.

Amplifying these Black aesthetics, *NansiRoachy* is an expressive and performative Black archives. Noise emanates from the spider through the speakers, which play archival reggae records by Ontario bands from Milton, Kitchener, and Toronto. The monitors and projections augment the soundscape with visual noise, creating a web of performative records. The cross-bleeding of sounds constitutes a soundscape of rhythms in speech, song, dance, light, and colour. When installed on a hard surface such as concrete, vibrations travel throughout the body and the whole structure becomes a resonating body, ultimately resonating within the barrel chambers. In these chambers, *NansiRoachy* mixes the sounds of the audio from the speakers, from the monitors and headphones, and from the people engaging with the sculpture, such that the sound becomes fuller. The sound waves affecting the body vibrationally and conceptually speak to the latent vibrations of the ocean waves of the barrels' migration to Canada.

In my original design, I planned to attach wheels to the legs of the figure, but this made the structure unstable. Instead, I added feet, which suggested the sculpture required a stronger “groundings” to situate the stories in place, while still suggesting movement through the barrels and carts and through the sculpture's design, which allows it to be taken apart and reconstructed.

Because the media equipment and the material records collected during the research required a space within the structure, I steered away from my original design and added an airline galley food container and a media equipment storage case, which were both made of aluminum. These boxes also act as a support structure to hold a projector. In figure 3, a projector sits on the floor playing a video of the phytogram film made by participants and myself; these phytograms are woven into a “web” seen protruding out of the back of *NansiRoachy* in figure 3. The protrusion/intrusion is the cockroach “wing” indicative of Auntie Roachy, a mitigating figure to the tricksterism of Anansi. It was a challenge to make the wings work aesthetically on top of the barrels, and I experimented with several different designs, spawning several sets of wings. The final design was instead inserted into the orifice of the spider to suggest a web of stories exiting its core in order to take flight in the projection and then retract into the

body when the sculpture needed to travel. Woven into the web are phytograms, the material documents of the plants to which Jamaicans in Canada relate—sorrel, ginger, scallion, lavender, ginkgo biloba—a reminder of the need to ground the stories within the tension of diasporic being. They are also an instrument of opacity in some of the videos, resisting the full transparency of Black lives, reserving some stories, some images, and some relationships for those with deeper connections to the community.

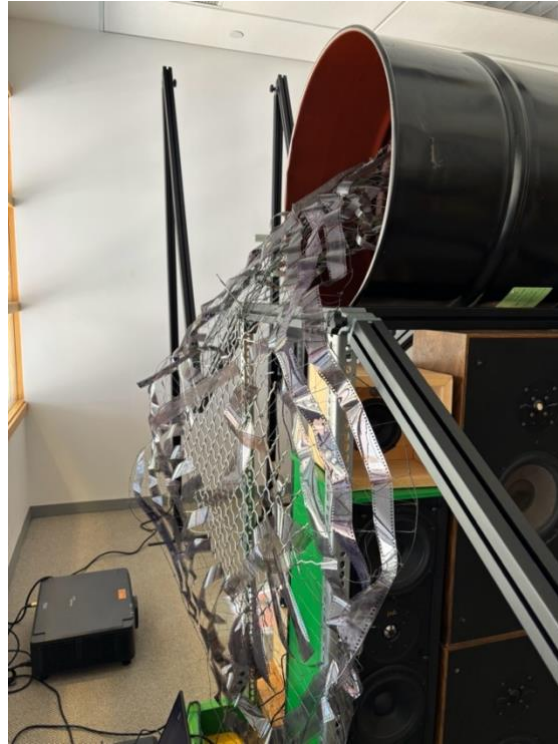


Figure 3 Phytogram “wing.”

A second projector shows newly created looped videos as my artistic activations of the archives I encountered and made. The videos can be projected from *NansiRoachy*'s underbelly on top of the coloured boxes, or they can spin a web to project from another location so that they are roughly 20' w x 5' h, depending on the aspect ratio of each individual projection, for an immersive, embodied experience of the process. The phytograms and hand-processed film signify diasporic placemaking and offer further catalysts for conversations as an embodied relationship to the aesthetic of experimental film. The video files for these projections are linked within the dissertation and listed below as a catalogue for this display:

Melody's Herbs: <https://vimeo.com/1025618261/9ff409c5fd>

Phytogram Workshop: <https://vimeo.com/1025617431/c94155879f>

breaking down the house: <https://vimeo.com/1015884767/efd046b847>

Domestic Workers: <https://vimeo.com/1029860908/c84dc2dc9b>

Long Time Gyal: <https://vimeo.com/1015880232/b51edaff1e?ts=0&share=copy>

Heritage Singers Focus Group: <https://vimeo.com/1025736116/b9553966e9>

As *NansiRoachy* ventures into the world through community and gallery exhibitions, the media sculpture intervenes into art and archival discourses for the historical records of the Jamaican diaspora and Black archives more generally.

CHAPTER 1

Introduction

The past is not waiting for us back there to recoup our identities against. It is always retold, rediscovered, and reinvented. It has to be narrativized. We got to our own pasts through history, memory, and desire, not as literal facts.

—Stuart Hall²

The body's archive is contained not only in the ways in which it has been surveilled, constructed, and interpellated but also in the history of Black looks, gestures, gaits, and how the memory of slavery and displacement is embedded within and among them.

—Barrington Walker³

I come to this research not as an impartial ethnographic observer creating an archive of a community, but as one who belongs to that community and expands on the ongoing collective work of recovering its history. To that end, I have facilitated an assemblage of embodied records in the Jamaican diaspora in Ontario, preserved in photographic and audiovisual media as well as in textual records. From the perspectives of those whose ancestors crossed the Middle Passage, the Kala Pani, the Pacific Ocean, and the Caribbean Sea, I am conducting archival research to counter the imperial eye with its colonial gaze that locks white ocular violence onto Black and Brown bodies and Indigenous lands. The gaze betrays the physical, emotional, and social oppression that dislocates Black and Brown peoples from their homelands and adopted lands, effectively punishing them in perpetuity. Caribbean peoples live within the afterlives of Indigenous genocide, the transatlantic trade of enslaved Africans and the systems of slavery that held them and their descendants in bondage, seventeenth-century European indentureship, and nineteenth-century East Asian and South Asian indentureship, and thus carry the traceable epigenetic scars of

surviving.⁴ This research is, in part, inspired by a desire for cultural recovery, stitching together personal stories and lived experiences with theory as a Black feminist approach to writing and making.

Whether in school, at home, or in broader society, I was disciplined to watch my diction⁵ and warned that I would be judged by my use of Patwa,⁶ resulting in language loss and cultural disconnection. My body, perspective, and self-identification have a specific history that inscribes my particular place within the research as an insider-outsider. I self-identify as Black and Hakka Chinese, what I call, with a wry smile, “Blakka.” I am a Jamaican-born Canadian and describe myself as having a Black interiority. My African and Chinese ancestors locate me within Caribbean legacies of enslavement and indentureship and coexist alongside my Scottish and Caribbean indigenous ancestry. I acknowledge how lighter skin tone accrues privileges in Jamaican and Canadian societies, regardless of economic position. Though I was brought up in these entangled cultures, I was socialized in Canada and Europe; when it came to racism, only my Blackness mattered. However, I also lean into the Hakka part of my identity and the meaning of its signifier in English, namely “guest.” Hakka people are travellers, often forcibly removed after lingering in a location for a short while or even generations, adopting new peoples and cultures. Hakka is not associated with any particular territory and reminds me that I am always already a guest on Indigenous land. In Jamaica and the diaspora, there was—and is—an uneasy cross-cultural adoption between Black and Hakka Chinese people. I now situate myself on Turtle Island within a tension that continues to grapple with anti-Black and, to some extent, anti-Asian racism, negotiating how to come to terms with living on stolen territory while addressing a history of stolen bodies.

In this introduction, I take the opportunity to recall how I came to this research. As I write, I sit facing a sliding door in rural Ontario, looking out onto the goldenrod, sumac, apple trees, hay, and asters that belie another kind of hybridization under colonial duress. Plants offer medicines—physically, when ingested or inhaled—but they also create space conducive for respite. “Giving-on-and-with”⁷ describes a nonterritorial, nonconsumptive relation to land, for which plants are signifiers as well as conduits towards an indescribable emancipatory aura. Writing this dissertation has emotionally and intellectually required

moments of making a film with plants and handling the plants from the land on which I am a guest, along with plants from in Jamaica, an island on which my ancestors were also unwilling “guests” through forced removal and indentured labour. With a nod to Alanis Obomsawin’s film *Trick or Treaty?* (2014)⁸ and Maurice Switzer, I acknowledge that my presence on this land we call Canada carries with it a responsibility because “Gakina Gidagwi’igoomin Anishinaabewiyang”—we are all treaty people.⁹ I am, therefore, a treaty person. The plants remind me of the migrations that brought me here and the responsibility to steward the land as one who has migrated to a territory bound by the Two Row Wampum, a treaty codifying mutual respect while sharing and caring for the land. I furthermore think and act on this land as an artist, curator, scholar, mother, spouse, raggamuffin¹⁰ daughter, and sister. In the process of making, I frame, arrange, and find modalities to communicate knowledge.

The intellectual output of such scholars as Paul Gilroy, Stuart Hall, C. L. R. James, Édouard Glissant, and Sylvia Wynter have underscored how inter-/multi-/transdisciplinary practices reflect a long tradition of Black Caribbean knowledge production through poetics, broadly defined as arts, sports, and social justice.¹¹ As a scholar, I am trained to see the world analytically and synthetically and have intellectual and artistic tools that help me identify novel points of inquiry; as a figurative sculptor, I pay attention to the body and its micromovements and can recognize a Black gait and, even more specifically, a Jamaican one. As a social practice artist, I seek to mitigate power differentials by declaring my positionality and opening art and scholarly spaces for participants and their knowledge by creating work in partnership with them. As a curator, I pay attention to how different works speak to each other within a space and to a public. These modes of knowledge creation bolster a deep audio and visual investigation into movement itself as a method of record keeping. It is essential to this project, therefore, that I integrate all of these practices to address not only the content of the records, but the methodology of archiving.

As enslaved Black peoples were forbidden from education and thus from the scribal activities that would otherwise preserve their perspectives in the archives, I argue that embodied archiving methods continued post-emancipation into the present and indicate enduring retention methods of oral traditions.¹²

Because historical oppression produced a demographic always already economically disadvantaged within the viscous and vicious system of post-emancipation racial capitalism, few Black people could afford such technologies as movie cameras to record their everyday lives. Moreover, Euro-Western archival paradigms recognized documentation produced by the structures of power through “juridical evidence of government agencies”¹³ and had a bias for scribal documents such as travel diaries or films produced by privileged classes.¹⁴ Thus the records of colonialism’s subalterns were rarely collected, much less preserved in mainstream archives.

Compounding the problem of the dearth of collected archival materials of Black Caribbean communities in Canada is the fact that a significant mass of historical records are created by these descendants of the formerly enslaved and indentured as oral traditions. Such cultural forms are at risk of disappearing due to migration, intercultural and interracial unions, and assimilation into new countries. For Jamaicans in Canada, moreover, generations of descendants disconnect from Jamaican culture and instead embark upon an often futile journey towards belonging and prosperity within the nation-state’s logics of settler-colonialism and racial capitalism, even though these logics work against the very existence of Black life.¹⁵ To counter these social barriers that work against the generational transmission and retention of oral traditions, time-based media becomes increasingly valuable insofar as they are best able to preserve embodied knowledge. Although little of such media from Black families are stored in official archives, it is worth noting that as video and audio technologies became more accessible in the 1960s, they were increasingly used in marginalized communities, spurring national programs such as Challenge for Change by the National Film Board of Canada.¹⁶ In fact, video cameras became increasingly affordable as they shrunk to the palm-sized camcorder in the 1980s and 1990s, thus expanding amateur film production.¹⁷ The literature is silent, however, on how ubiquitous video was in Black families. My research therefore contributes to decolonial and antiracist initiatives of community archives working outside of the mainstream institutions and is vital in preserving at least some of the community’s records as film and video.

Living on Turtle Island introduces another layer of complexity beyond my being Caribbean in diasporic spaces. Because cultural loss ensues with each migration, I argue that a recognition of origin(s) contributes towards meeting protocols while living on Indigenous lands. One aspect of Indigenous protocols is introducing who you are, where you come from, and where your ancestors originate. With each successive generation, “where you come from” might be within the state boundaries of the nation called Canada. The acknowledgment of ancestors, however, situates each generation within their own matrix of diasporic belonging.¹⁸ I take the time to dwell on this question of Black life on Indigenous land to suggest that being in relation with Indigenous peoples under their protocols works counter to the settler-colonial narratives official archives support by emphasizing the fact that non-Indigenous peoples are guests on the territories within this nation-state, and that, at the very least, there is a duty to learn the first laws and protocols of this land. The archive assembled in this research is a way of articulating who we are as Jamaicans as descendants of creolized indigenous African peoples who experienced slavery, African and Caribbean Indigenous, Chinese, and South Asian indentured workers, all accompanied by our respective stories and ancestors. We bring our histories into the room when introducing ourselves and then open a dialogue. In describing an origin story of the presence of Africa¹⁹ on Indigenous lands, Dionne Brand articulates what it means to bring this history to bear on the present:

The door casts a haunting spell on personal and collective consciousness in the Diaspora. Black experience in any modern city or town in the Americas is a haunting. One enters a room and history follows; one enters a room and history precedes. History is already seated in the chair in the empty room when one arrives.²⁰

This genealogical protocol of introduction, I argue, leaves no possibility to assimilate under a nation narrated into Whiteness, nor can one fall into the trap of appropriating Indigenous identities if one acknowledges the liveness of these histories and genealogies.²¹ While I do not ignore the complicated histories of Indigenous and Black relations on Turtle Island, I do want to impart that solidarity between Indigenous and Black peoples is not a given simply because of a common but different experience of bearing the brunt of colonialism and its racial ideologies. Rather, I strongly suggest solidarity as an active

state that can be reignited with new generations recognizing one another's genealogies and histories. This dissertation, therefore, is directed towards children of future generations of Jamaicans on Turtle Island to help them locate a ground on which to stand. In Jamaican, the "ground" can be a verb—"groundings"—a conversation amongst equals in the development of a relation.²² The "ground" is also the "dirt"—or in Jamaican, "dut"—the soil from which we receive bodily and spiritual nourishment.²³ Rather than property, perhaps it will be possible to return to these concepts of dirt and soil emergent from the histories of a little island in an archipelago in the Caribbean Sea.

In the spirit of the liveness of Black history, and the place of autoethnography within its archive, I interrupt this more academic writing with a personal story:

The Gait

My third of four children was six years old on a school trip in the dead of winter when I noticed a haunting of an ancestral movement. My child had always had trouble fitting in and drifted towards the back of the group of boisterous children. There was one Black child in the class from a family of three Jamaican brothers who were being fostered by a White family in a rural area in which most everyone was White. This child hung back with my White-passing child and struck up conversations with him. I watched how they walked, two othered children enjoying each other's company. Most striking was the shared gait as they both walked undeniably "like Jamaicans"—at a slower pace, with their rolling shoulders alternating as they ever so slightly leaned back only to drop a bounce in their walk and repeat. And then something subtle yet remarkable transpired. When the instructor called the children into groups, my child had no idea what to do. The Black child hailed my child as kin, not knowing his background (and maybe he was not even consciously aware of his own), and said, "Hey, Eric, let's join this group." The recognition in my body of that hail was so intense that I went to the school shortly thereafter to inquire about his situation. The family, I knew, was not good for him, and I questioned the school administrator about his future. She said he and his siblings would soon live with their aunt and that it

would be a good move. I never saw him again, but I still think about him as I write these words. I honour him, Alvin, in this dissertation because he was the germ of recognizing an embodied archive in everyday movements. This set of circumstances suggested that even without my own or my family's intervention, my descendants would retain something that would identify them in relation to Jamaican peoples and Black Atlantic culture.

Years later, I helped administer and facilitate a hand-processing filmmaking workshop in Saugeen First Nation (SFN) with the Independent Imaging Retreat, or "Film Farm," called Saugeen Takes on Film. The program was in part supported by York University's Archive/Counter-Archive, a community-based research initiative activating audiovisual archives in marginalized communities, led by Dr. Janine Marchessault and Dr. Michael Zryd. Marchessault asked my colleague Adrian Kahgee (SFN) about the archives of her community. Kahgee responded that, in her community, archives were stories.²⁴ The films in the workshop reinterpreted those stories and re-preserved them in material and digital media. The plant processing of some of the films tied them to the territories on which they were made. As a witness to the conversation, it dawned on me that oral traditions could be regarded as archives in the Jamaican diaspora, and, thinking back to the two boys on that wintry day and recalling the importance of transmitting dance moves at family parties, I began to think of movement and cultural gestures, along with stories, songs, and other performances as a counter-archive alongside the meaningful information that exists as environmental knowledge and other records of quotidian life. My research, therefore, asks: *What are archives (historical records) in the Jamaican diaspora? How would an archives (the repository of the records) function, and what would it look like if the architecture of the repository corresponded to the community's archives?*

Chapter Summary

Throughout this dissertation, I interlace autoethnographic accounts to underscore the theoretical underpinnings of the doctoral project as an articulation of how theory and making emerge out of lived

experience as necessary Black feminist praxis. I oscillate between my lived experience in the moment of writing in the present and jump to the past in describing the research process over the past two years. I hope this grammatical approach does not disorient the reader as I attempt to convey the sense of what it means to be what Kamau Brathwaite calls an “arrivant”²⁵—ever-arriving, never landing—yet again, in the turbulent Caribbean and Canadian diasporic spaces of possibility and compounded time. Throughout the dissertation, I will use “archives,” the plural form, and “records” interchangeably, as is the case in practice, but demarcate when “archives” (with an *s*) refers to an architecture—an institution or repository.

Chapter 1 introduces the rationale and stakes of the research and why creating a Jamaican diasporic archive is vital to Black history in Canada and why Black archival practice requires new theoretical and methodological approaches.

Chapter 2 covers the historical context and theoretical debates in critical archival theory and Black feminism to argue for an expanded definition of archival records to include oral traditions and everyday movements and the role that Black women play in ensuring the preservation of these records. I ground these frameworks in Caribbean cultural theories to argue that critical archival theorizing emerged from Caribbean critiques of colonization and slavery parallel to the Western development of archival frameworks. However, such terms as “African retention” were not framed within archival frameworks. This research thus intervenes by inserting modes of cultural retention into the archives and records debate. The intervention relies on the authority of participant interviews, analysis through remediation and process cinema methods, and recent groundbreaking seminal publications, namely *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record: An Archives Reader* (2018) and the thematic issue of *The Black Scholar* on Black archival practice (2022).

I rarely use the term “memory” and do not engage with the field of memory studies because such a framework tethers the intangible archive to an affective context of trauma that emerges from theorizing the Holocaust. The genealogy of the field is essential to its exclusion from this study because the field emerged out of a context of Jewish culture, which has a long and deep scribal tradition. The trauma of

chattel slavery, I suggest, needs different frameworks to describe the individual and collective subjectivities of trauma. Memory studies is first and foremost concerned with *how* one remembers and enters discourses of fallibility. My argument instead engages archival studies and the discourses of testimony, witnessing, and evidence to situate the ways in which Black Atlantic cultures and Jamaicans, specifically, record, transmit, and preserve history. In my interviews, I do not ask participants to recall memories but to record their stories with the legal weight of testimony onto different media. Their testimonies, as I argue in the subsection “Performative, Embodied, Living Archives,” archival memory, to think alongside John Burrows and Dallas Hunt, should hold at least equal weight to documents such as colonial diaries, which have their own limitations regarding historical accuracy. Even birth certificates were not necessarily reflective of the day the event transpired.²⁶

Chapter 3 outlines the research-creation methodology whereby the creative process dialogues with participants’ lived experiences, material and chemical processes of process cinema, remediation, and aesthetics to communicate the research findings. These methods forge a research trajectory that veers from conventional ethnographic or anthropological approaches to highlight participants’ autoethnographies, which theorize and produce knowledge.

Chapter 4 advances the various modes of epistemological preservation approaches to convey community knowledge. I theorize Black archival practice as a method using the body as media to record living archives to then talk about the remediation of the archive using analogue and digital media. Process cinema methods of working with plants describe the creation of the “counter-archive” with members of three Jamaican communities in Ontario. The intertwining of writing, making, and the liveness of conversation intuitively embodies the archiving methods of the community. I incorporated process cinema into the Caribbean fold as a poetics of archiving to articulate how plants form the background of everyday life for Jamaicans and to preserve a sense of place in the archive expressed by the plant itself.

The resulting media sculpture is articulated in the fourth chapter and will be exhibited in different community spaces. Called *NansiRoachy*, the archives-as-repository is an open-ended, immersive

sculptural and mediated context that formally embraces the oral and embodied histories of community members. The mobile archives—as container and home—can be reactivated, added to, and subtracted from over time and will enliven community and gallery spaces as sites of knowledge mobilization through exhibitions. Corresponding to the sculpture is the Heritage Singers Canada fonds, a custodial archival collection for which I facilitated the donation to the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC), which is the official archives of York University. Additionally, I have arranged to donate the material from this research at a future date. This chapter intervenes in the field of cinema and media studies as well as visual art and curation to situate Black archival theory as an outcome of creative, often collective, practice.

I conclude the dissertation in Chapter 5 by recounting how my approach to the living archives of the community using process cinema aesthetically and medicinally aims to counter the effects of structural archival power that produces harmful narratives and exclusions based on race, gender, class, ability, and sexuality and their intersections. Moreover, I show how the repository can represent the community in its materiality, storytelling, and movement/migration.

CHAPTER 2

Theoretical Frameworks: Towards a Theory of Black Archival Practice

In this chapter, I set the scene for Black Caribbean archival practice in Canada by delineating the contours of the historical context. I show how the period of enslavement created institutional aftereffects in the form of gaps and silences in the archives, and point to where institutions, scholars, film festivals, artists, and community activists seek to repair these gaps. A discussion of the theoretical underpinnings then follows, bringing critical archival theory in conversation with Black feminist theory.

Since enslaved Black peoples were forbidden from education and therefore from the scribal activities that would have preserved their perspectives in the archives, I argue embodied methods of archiving continued post-emancipation into the present and provide evidence of the retention methods of oral traditions, if not the content. Historiography pre- and post-emancipation is constructed from the diaries, governmental reports, newspapers, and travelogues of White colonialists accessed through national and university archives in the UK, the US, and Jamaica.²⁷ The economic legacies of slavery persist under what Cedric Robinson theorized as racial capitalism, which facilitates the exploitation of colonialism's Others, and Black and Indigenous peoples specifically.²⁸ For instance, if one considers the field of film and media studies and the issue of access to moving image technologies, while middle-class White families adopted film and video technologies readily, the economic realities of most Black families meant that photographs remain the primary mode of visual documentation.²⁹ The economic and institutional realities that affected media production by Black creators and the dissemination of their films, I suggest, produced corresponding afterlives in institutions such as the archives. An important counterexample in the American context is Chicago's South Side, where middle-income Black families could purchase these technologies. The film reels they produced between 1929 and 1982 are preserved at the University of Chicago's South Side Home Movie Project, founded by Jacqueline Stewart. Where home movies do exist in Canada amongst Black, Indigenous, and racialized peoples more generally, the

visual record is almost exclusively from a White settler-colonial gaze rather than by members of the respective communities. The latter, except for a few rare exceptions, are generally not collected by mainstream archives. One notable exception in Canada is the Regent Park Film Festival's Home Made Visible project, which is preserved at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC) at York University Libraries. The project's mandate aimed to fill the gap of IBPOC home movies in the archives. This research project shares comparable goals. Notably, two Black families are represented in the Home Made Visible fonds: the Valcin and Reddick families.³⁰ Alongside these home movies are a small number of amateur and professional films made by Black Canadians scattered across collections and archives, and they highlight another lacuna in scholarly writing on Black vernacular media in Canada, attesting to areas of important future research. At the CTASC and Archives Ontario, professional and semiprofessional recordings of performances dominate Black media records, indicating the importance of everyday community performances such as folk dance and song, as well as carnival and sound clashes.³¹

Photographs and autobiographies also emerged in the community research. Widely used and accessible mobile digital technologies now replace the home movie gap and fulfill the desire to record the everyday. However, born-digital recordings are at even greater risk of deterioration and digital degradation. The community has ultimately used media to document musical performances, dance, and personal storytelling, which comprise the oral traditions of Jamaican life. However, those traditions become weaker due to migrations and measured assimilation into the Canadian context, and with each new generation born in Canada. Technology adds a further complication. Changing web platforms, lost cell phones, software updates, and obsolescence pose risks in terms of the disappearance of the documentation of contemporary life. In this vulnerable media environment, oral traditions—the performativity of embodied knowledge—serve as a presumably durable preservation method. My project, therefore, aims to complement community efforts to archive on social media, a cloud-based repository which is ultimately at the whim of “tech bros,”³² by collecting, documenting, preserving, recording, digitizing, and materializing digital archives³³ in three focus groups. I have furthermore created a

partnership with the CTASC for community members who wish to donate their records for the purpose of preservation and community access in an official archives.

My research focuses on the period of post-independence Jamaican migration to Canada of the late twentieth century, from the late 1960s to the 1980s, a period that marked a significant wave of emigration from the island to Canada due to political violence, economic stagnation, and hardship in Jamaica on the one hand, and immigration policies in Canada on the other.³⁴ I regard this period as a historical conjuncture in which a structure of feeling suggests the emergence of a new culture in Toronto, Canada, impacting fields such as health care, music, food, education, sport, and even language.³⁵ Many of the newcomers who settled in Toronto have since moved throughout the GTA, the rest of Ontario, and other locations throughout Canada. Based on participants' stories, the movement out of Toronto transpires in tandem with migrations back to Jamaica, to and from the UK, and back to Canada. As elders of the post-independence mass migrations in the 1960s and 1970s pass on, much of the knowledge of this period of Jamaican immigration to Canada wanes. The lived experience of "arrivants"³⁶ such as myself, who came as a child, remain unpacked, disjointed, dispersed. As previously stated, this period also marks a time when recording technologies such as tape recorders and handheld camcorders became more widely available and affordable.³⁷

While small community memory institutions addressing local Black histories exist in Canada, there is no museum addressing the vast presence of Black people on a provincial or national scale.³⁸ Instead, unpaid members of Black communities or artists such as Deanna Bowen, Nadine Valcin, and Camille Turner³⁹ who carry out this work to (dis)entangle Black stories from white colonial archives. Furthermore, historical records of the migration of Black/Caribbean peoples exist as sporadic, disconnected collections (Ontario Archives, Home Made Visible project at the CTASC)⁴⁰ in which very specific communities are swept up into the larger categories of "immigrant" or "Black" without an understanding by mainstream society, never mind archivists, of the complexity of each of these identity-forming categories, although this "undersight"⁴¹ is slowly changing.⁴² The scarcity of archival holdings

and the lack of representation in Canada's national narratives correlate with Jamaican immigrants' sense of what Shaunasea Brown calls be(long)ing and are indicative of Black Caribbean women's experience in Canada more generally⁴³ and the historical and white hegemonic cultural environment in which Jamaicans arrived.⁴⁴ Indeed, "communities marginalized by race, ethnicity, class, sexuality, gender and political position experience both the profoundly negative affective consequences of absence and misrepresentation in mainstream media and archives and the positive effect of complex and autonomous forms of representation in community-driven archives."⁴⁵ Moreover, collections in mainstream archives reflect the acquisition and macroappraisal practices of the "total archives" concept within Canada,⁴⁶ resulting in records of Black people in federal, provincial, and municipal archives reflecting trauma and exile within Canada, regardless of whether these records refer to slavery or position Black citizens as perpetual immigrants.⁴⁷ This project aims to counter mainstream narratives that overemphasize crime perpetrated by Jamaicans within a white supremacist society that underrepresents white crime and state violence,⁴⁸ overrepresents images of Black labour,⁴⁹ or constructs the few as exceptional citizens, as in the cases of Louise Bennett-Coverley (McMaster University Archives) and Jean Augustine (CTASC).⁵⁰ The research works against the very discourse of inclusion and multiculturalism that positions Black people as perpetual immigrants despite the presence of many Black Canadian communities and diasporic Jamaicans over centuries.⁵¹

Various projects support or create community counter-archives and serve as models for my project: the nationally networked, community-driven Archive/Counter-Archive (A/CA) project activating community archives, led by Janine Marchessault and Michael Zryd;⁵² Jacqueline Stewart's South Side Home Movie Project;⁵³ Regent Park Film Festival's Home Made Visible Project; the Toronto-based Building a Black Archive, led by Jonsaba Jabbi and Alannah Johnson; and the Black Memory Collective spearheaded by Black archivists. Important Caribbean-related music archives include Mark V. Campbell's North Side Hip Hop Archive, Alanna Stuart's Dancehall Archives, and the *Rhythms and Resistance* exhibition. While most projects lack the security and longevity of a custodial relationship with

an official archives, they do avoid the colonial baggage by keeping collections in the community.⁵⁴

Significant Caribbean records in official institutional archives include the Louise Bennett-Coverley “Miss Lou” fonds at McMaster University Archives, a rich collection of audiovisual material and scribal documents; and the Montgomery Collection of Caribbean Photographs, a special collection of the Art Gallery of Ontario, which is a significant image-based collection of Caribbean life, albeit comprised of prototypical examples of landscape and studio photographs epitomizing a colonial/neocolonial tourist gaze. Never had I imagined I would find an ancestor in one such studio photograph—not from the Montgomery Collection, but from a family archive.

Grand Mumma

In the course of writing and creating this dissertation, a photograph landed in my WhatsApp messages from my mother, depicting the kind of studio photography and gaze inherent to the Montgomery Collection. The photograph is of Grand Mumma Eliza (Elizabeth) Battick, my great-great-grandmother and an Afro-Indigenous woman. Cobbling together family stories and an entry on a genealogy website, I estimate she was born in 1857 and died in 1945. My mother describes herself as “tree-quawta chinee,”



Figure 4 Photograph of Elizabeth Battick and Alice Hue, precise date unknown. Possibly in the mid-1920s.

though that last quarter was never openly discussed. It was simply assumed that the unsaid was “Black.” The photograph is a typical studio shot taken during the early twentieth century. Since my grandmother was about the same age as the girl, Alice Hue, who appears to be between six and ten years old, I suggest the photo was likely taken sometime between the late 1920s and the early 1930s.

Grand Mumma is seated with her right side angled towards the camera as she gazes directly into the lens. She wears a sharp, structured, finely woven straw hat with a light-coloured ribbon wrapped around the slightly curled brim. Her hair peaks out through the sides of her face, and the strands have already turned grey, though her face looks much younger. Beaded earrings and a beaded necklace adorn her. The long-sleeved maxi dress is belted at the waist and appears to have patterning noticeable by some dark splotches on the skirt hem. Her left hand holds a bouquet in her lap, while her aged, veined right hand curls under, with a handbag wedged between her body and the chair. Her elbow rests on a leather handbag squeezed in between her and the chair, accenting her scooped laced shoes. Her

though that last quarter was never openly discussed. It was simply assumed that the unsaid was “Black.” The photograph is a typical studio shot taken during the early twentieth century. Since my grandmother was about the same age as the girl, Alice Hue, who appears to be between six and ten years old, I suggest the photo was likely taken sometime between the late 1920s and the early 1930s.

Grand Mumma is seated with her right side angled towards the camera as she gazes directly into the lens. She wears a sharp, structured, finely woven straw hat with a light-coloured

left arm threads through the thin arm of a little Chinese-looking girl standing next to her. The two seem uncomfortable in the presence of each other and in front of a camera, likely operated by a white male photographer. The girl's eyes stare as if transfixed, perhaps even scared, and I notice the wandering eye, unable to focus on the camera. Her straight black hair is unevenly cut along her fringe, and the bottom flips out ever so slightly. She wears a lacy dress with knee-high socks rolled down to her mid-knee—these are rather long socks. Her laced leather flats complete her look, and she is accessorized with a necklace and a small handbag slightly out of focus. The girl is Alice Hue, a niece of my great-grandmother, Laurabelle Anderson, Eliza Battick's youngest daughter, who became partners with Papa Jim Hue at a time when marriages between Black and Chinese people were rare.

Eliza Battick had a partner, a Scottish man named David Anderson, for whom she had eleven children. Eliza and David were presumably not married. I used to think that white enslavers and Black enslaved women could fall in love; however, as Barbara Bush pointedly and painfully reveals, the differential power at the heart of an interracial union was traumatic for Black women.⁵⁵ What does love even mean in a society regulated by racial and gender subordination, a situation of unfreedom that continues long after emancipation in 1838? Perhaps she was simply making the best of the limited choices for herself and her children.

Because the photo was scanned at a high resolution, I zoomed in and identified three scars no one in the family had noticed.



Figure 5 Eliza Battick, frame enlargement.

On her forehead is a star-shaped scar, and on her right cheek there are two or more perfectly parallel diagonal scars; though vague, there also appear to be markings mirrored on her left cheek. I want to suggest that these scars are consistent with scarification marks practiced in western Africa. They may or may not signify a particular ethnic group, but no other explanation in my research accounts for the very deliberate, deep markings that create atrophic scarring patterns on her delicate facial skin.⁵⁶ The third scar, in the middle of the front of her neck on her Adam's apple, is ostensibly a burn scar.⁵⁷

The significant literature on the matter and meaning of scarification in sub-Saharan African countries,⁵⁸ as well as on scars of punishment during slavery,⁵⁹ indicates the variable meanings scars play in social identification, for example, as signs of tribal belonging and exclusion, rites of passage, markings of enslavement or, conversely, of freedom.⁶⁰ According to Paul Lovejoy, scarification ceased to be relevant as a practice to transmit to future generations because of the brutal bodily punishment inflicted during enslavement, as well as the later weakening of ethnic practices due to interracial creolization of the people.⁶¹ Eliza Battick's scars present a counterexample to this claim. One plausible explanation could be that the transatlantic slave trade ceased in 1802, but between 1841 and 1865 indentured Africans were, still forcibly, brought to Jamaica.⁶² It is possible that their descendants, located primarily in the eastern part of the island in St. Thomas Parish, still maintain indigenous practices like *kumina*, a religious ceremony, rhythm, and dance rehearsing African survivals.⁶³ Such recent "arrivants" could presumably have continued scarification into the next generation. I want to pause on the search for definitive explanations for Grand Mummas's scars and instead take the liberty of drawing on Andrea Davis's use of "rememory" and Saidiya Hartman's critical fabulation⁶⁴ to intimate that such marks indicate a gesture remembered. The number of scars on her face lays bare some of the trauma experienced by her Black female body. I have not been able to ascertain whether these scars were due to an unfortunate accident or whether they were inflicted upon her, but their presence raises my curiosity about her. My own embodied sensing cannot deny this documentation of her suffering.

Barbara Bush notes the limited agency Black women had in resisting slavery but also underscores how harmful stereotypes of Black women under a white patriarchal plantation society both defeminized and sexualized them, threatening their personal security.⁶⁵ Emancipation ended the legal condition of slavery but did not bring material and social equality, nor end its cruelty.⁶⁶ I once thought that the lovely Victorian dresses Black women wore in historical photographs such as in the Montgomery Collection, for instance, were signifiers of middle- and upper-class attainment. I now believe—and this requires more research—that these staid dresses with their long sleeves and full skirts unsuitable for tropical climates

were not simply meant to cover up feminine sexuality. Perhaps the garments African women and African-descendent women wore were, in fact, cover-ups for their scarred bodies. For Grand Mumma, a Black woman born to a mother who was enslaved, scars are her historiography violently etched onto her body. Beyond the epigenetic traces of trauma,⁶⁷ these historiographical movements onto the skin's surface are likewise transmitted through the generations.

I am thinking about these scars during a writing residency at the Feminist Art Residency, managed with care by Allyson Mitchell and Deirdre Logue.⁶⁸ The writing has required a continual integration of my making practice, regardless of whether I think the making directly relates to the dissertation, because it is in the making that these stories come into being. Making phytograms alongside Deirdre Logue, we have been thinking about our mothers (and foremothers), death, and intergenerational trauma. Working with these life-giving plants with colours that brighten in the sunlight, we find patterns revealed as the plants float in the chemistry of the developer. I am

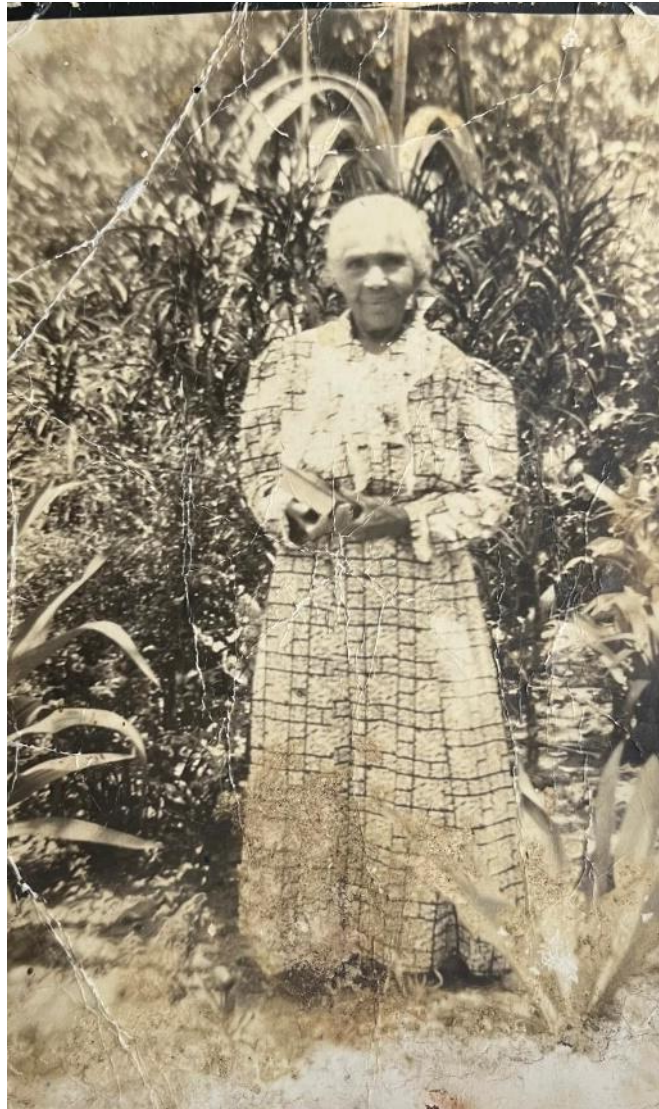


Figure 6 Elizabeth Battick, date unknown.

experiencing what Logue calls the “haptic feeling” of the medicines as they touch my skin and when I view them again on the skin of the film.⁶⁹ This feeling alerts me to the multivalent ways in which plants work on the psyche, the spirit, and the body. I wonder what my effect is on the plant. The first photograph

of Grand Mumma shows her holding a bouquet in her frail hand. In the second photograph, taken when she was much older, she appears to hold a bible. What function . . . what reassurances do these entities and objects give to the person depicted? Do they give her the strength to keep going?

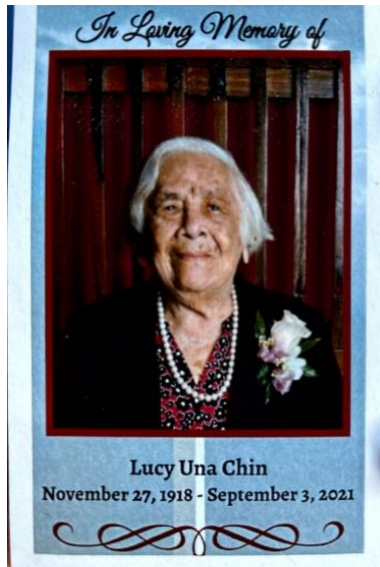


Figure 7 Lucy (Hue) Chin, funeral card, September 2021.

My grandmother, Lucy (Hue) Chin, Eliza Battick's granddaughter and Alice Hue's cousin, smuggled a finger-length cactus branch in her purse when she emigrated to Canada in the early 1970s. My mother, the daughter of Lucy (Hue) Chin, nurtured her houseplants as if they were part of her. I later realized that all these houseplants were tropical—plants that grew in her, her mother's, and her foremothers' gardens.

Despite my complicated relationship with my grandmother, Lucy Chin's funeral photocard sits atop my desk next to my computer to remind me of the importance of this dissertation to my family history, but also to remind me how it is entangled with the community history of Jamaicans

in Canada. In Lucy Chin, I see a resemblance with the elder Eliza Battick. When my grandmother died, her funerary arrangement consisted of the typical flowers found at funerals in Canada—roses and chrysanthemums rather than tropical flowers, like the corsage on her left shoulder in this picture on her hundredth birthday, which my mind connects to the flowers on Grand Mumma's lap. I made phytograms with some of Lucy Chin's funerary flowers, certain I had broken cultural protocols, but with my aunts' permission. These flowers locate my grandmother in Canada and signify her relationship to plants and how they accompanied her throughout her life.

Theorizing Black Diasporic Archives

I situate this research on assembling a Jamaican diasporic archive within broader contours of Black archival practice to develop a preliminary framework encompassing the range of approaches addressing Black Caribbean archives. Within the field of critical archival theory, Black archival theory's marginalized role is palpable. The genealogy of the field obscures the contributions of Black/Caribbean⁷⁰ scholars, despite Michelle Caswell's scholarly interventions on critical race serving as the backbone of community archives research. The year 2018 marked the recent explosion of scholarly texts and community projects coinciding with reignited Black radical movements and the formation of Black Lives Matter. The recent wave of solidarity demonstrated across worldwide Black Lives Matter protests after George Floyd's murder on May 25, 2020, constituted the milieu in which I conducted my research, a project that became all the more vital as society reckoned with structural and systemic racism. A study about a Black archive is therefore vital in thinking about the changes necessary to care for Black archives in and for community more generally.

This chapter therefore lays the theoretical foundation for identifying and caring for Black Caribbean archives. I first trace a genealogy of critical archival theory, building on the *Black Scholar's* special issue on "Black Archival Practice," edited by Tonia Sutherland and Zakiya Collier,⁷¹ to contribute to a foundation for a geographically adaptive Black archival theorizing. Doing so warrants an examination of how media archives disrupt traditional archival practice to create what Paula Amad calls a *counter-archive*. The chapter then turns to Black feminism to frame the ethics of community work and show how historical preservation might be imbued with care practices. I focus on Caribbean approaches to emphasize the matrilineal networks of care that expand beyond family to include community. This dissertation is deeply personal and, I hope, transformative concerning institutions, disciplines, and policy. After all, I am a political science student for whom the end goal of any social action is policy intervention to help make a more liveable future *now*,⁷² a concept I adopt from Andrea Davis. I decentre archival

structures of the scribal, epitomized by the printing press,⁷³ and instead propose a counter-structure of preservation and access based on the ontology of the records arising in the Jamaican community. I argue that the retention of African and Indigenous non-scribal modes of recordkeeping were integral to documenting Black lives during enslavement and persisted throughout modernity into the contemporary moment.

Black Caribbean Cultural History

The question of what distinguishes the Caribbean from other places of Kamau Brathwaite's concept of *creolization*, defined as the mix of different cultures creating a new culture,⁷⁴ dominated Caribbean scholarly discourse for decades. The Afro-genesis and Afro-retention model moved away from the dominant narrative of European influence to theorize that everyday practices in the Caribbean—language, song, food celebratory, dance, and religion—indicated a profound, rich continuity of African traditions in Creole cultures.⁷⁵ Maureen Warner-Lewis focuses on Central Africa to elucidate how this region alone impacted Creole languages and customs.⁷⁶ Barbara Bush's gender analysis illuminates the ways in which Black women were the progenitors of culture in culinary arts, spiritual practice, and ethics; Bush thus offers a valuable resource in African cultural retention and a counternarrative to scholars who maintain that culture does not come from the oppressed.⁷⁷ Concepts such as African retention and African survivals⁷⁸ in the creolization debate allude to the preservation function of language and customs. Scholars Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson's archival excavations of the post-emancipation culture shed light on the continuity of historical everyday practices that include gestures such as kissing teeth and side eye, but also performative traditions such as set girl competitions in Christmas celebrations; syncretic religious practices; foodways, etc.⁷⁹ Cuban scholar Antonio Benítez-Rojo intervenes in the debate with chaos theory to account for everyday resistive practice and African survivals such as rhythm and movement, emphasizing the turbulence of these intersecting cultures.⁸⁰ Elsewhere, Benítez-Rojo rehearses

the syncretic nature of Caribbean music, suggesting that a preexisting metarhythm connects the rhythms of the land and sea, traditional rhythms, and those experienced on the plantation.

But there are also the rhythms of the sugar mill's machines, the machete stroke that cuts the cane, the overseer's lash, and the planter's language, music, and dance. Later came other rhythms, from India, from China, and from Java. And finally, all these rhythms mixed with one another to form a network of rhythmic flows whose most notable expressions today are salsa, Latin jazz, and West Coast African music. This complex polyrhythmic orchestration was born on the plantation and now lies within the memory of the people of the Caribbean.⁸¹

I raise some of these threads of the creolization debate to draw attention to the potential of what counter-archival framing of performative everyday practices can do for Jamaicans' own understanding of the importance of their historical preservation methods and their relationship to the continuity of those links to Africa/the Caribbean. Diana Taylor acknowledges the importance of the performance of oral traditions in Latin America, what she refers to as the "repertoire."⁸² In Jamaica, oral performance is intimately linked to the language spoken by the people. Jamaican scholar and Jamaican language/Jamiékan Langwíj⁸³ advocate Carolyn Cooper notes the labels by which Jamaicans refer to their language, Patois/Patwa/Patwah, and the linguists' designation of Jamaican Creole, ossify the shame in which people view their own language, a judgment imparted on them by the colonial education system. As a public scholar, Cooper argues for a term that pushes against pejorative classifications to instead describe a socially central, bona fide language: Jamaican. She delineates the contours of Jamaican oral tradition or repertoire:

The oral tradition in Jamaica is conceived as a broad repertoire of themes and cultural practices, as well as a more narrow taxonomy of verbal techniques. The thematic repertoire includes diverse cultural beliefs/practices such as religion—obeah, myal, ettu, revival, kumina, spirit possession; entertainment/socialisation practices—children's games, story-telling rituals, tea-meetings and social dance, for example. The verbal techniques include the compressed allusiveness of proverb, the enigmatic indirection of riddle and the antiphonal repetitions of oral narration which recur as set linguistic formulations in folk-tale, legend, song-text and performance poetry. Jamaican, the preferred language of orality, assumes the burdens of the social stigmatisation to which the practitioners of Afrocentric ideology in Jamaica are continually subjected. Upward social mobility requires the shedding of the old skin of early socialisation: mother tongue, mother culture, mother wit—the feminised discourse of voice, identity and native knowledge.⁸⁴

I wish to contribute to the project of disrupting the sustained hierarchy of the printing press and other textual records and to construe the repertoire more provocatively as the archives of the people, counter to the colonial record.

Similar to Indigenous Peoples on Turtle Island, the oral traditions of African indigenous peoples and their descendants relied on stories to record and transmit history. While I explain the reconfiguration of Anansi stories in the Jamaican and diasporic context in detail in chapter 3, I raise here the importance of this West African mythological figure, stories of which migrated with the captured and enslaved peoples crossing the Middle Passage and transformed in the Caribbean. Anansi is a shape-shifting spider figure, and I use it as an archival concept to pinpoint an African “origin” story for the ways in which the Black/Caribbean body archives. Note the retention of the Akan word “Anansi” and how the shape-shifting figure provides conceptual room for the transformation stories and their societal function. Emily Zobel Marshall reminds us of the ways in which oral performative retelling is shown through even textual representations of Anansi when recounted in Jamaican.⁸⁵ Drawing from James Scott, Zobel Marshall refers to the function of Anansi stories during the times of enslavement as containing the “hidden transcripts.”⁸⁶ Carol Bailey similarly notes the preservation of Jamaican culture in fiction writing through performing orality in the text written in Jamaican as a “poetics of performance.” Notably, Bailey pays equal weight to the discursive role of the environments in which the performances of everyday life transpire:

Thus, inscribed in these pages are not only particular oral forms such as songs, stories and proverbs, but also the communal spaces (yards, verandahs, village squares, friend and family gathering, political meetings, demonstrations, dancehalls, churches, carnival parades) where performances are staged. In such spaces, these forms of orature also function as markers of belonging and as vehicles of political engagement and protest.⁸⁷

Moreover, Bailey notes that “performing fictions” “functions as the discursive space where Caribbean ideologies and cultural traditions are scrutinized, challenged and reinforced,”⁸⁸ deftly describing knowledge generation through oral-performative methods cognate to textual processes. Indeed, as scholars Michael Bucknor and Cornel Bogle suggest, Caribbean literature is itself an archive alongside

other modes of cultural production.⁸⁹ Impacted by migration, Sharon Beckford recounts the ways in which Jamaican-Canadian literature helps her sustain foodways and folkways in diaspora.⁹⁰

Roshini Kempadoo further theorizes artwork as constitutive of the Creole archive in both modes—creative writing and making—including personal narratives with their critical fabulations as sites of archival information. Stuart Hall’s notion of the living archive emphasizes diasporic, ongoing transmissions, migrations, and reinterpretations of the historical record through narratives, curation, and other hermeneutic, creative acts. For Hall, this living archive expanded and is constituted by the production of a set of practices executed by those who define the archive, and as such, he opens archival practice beyond professional archivists.⁹¹ Thus artists, community members, collectors, and the like have the power to define the scope, content, and extent of their records. Kempadoo builds on the articulation of the concept of creolization through Kamau Brathwaite’s historical analysis of converging peoples and cultures. The heterogeneous, relational, cultural amalgam of Creole archives weaves together scribal archival records of colonial collections, everyday and formalized performances, community narratives, and artworks to reveal what James Scott describes as “hidden transcripts,” or coded knowledge that communicates Caribbean subjectivities within systems of power—“those offstage speeches, gestures, and practices that confirm, contradict, or inflect what appears in the public transcript.”⁹² These modes of communication are grounded in the islands’ plantation histories that produced new languages, cultures, and peoples which emerged out of an oppressive and violent system that caused the destruction of community and familial bonds (though not completely) in favour of a society structured by racial and gender hierarchies. Our ancestors laboured and withstood immeasurable suffering to work with plants for export. This Creole archive, therefore, includes plant “stories” on film through process cinema to accompany the human experience in Caribbean diasporic archives.

Olive Lewin’s research theorizes how stories, dance, and proverbs all became repositories of the archive. Lewin understood the importance of folk culture. With the funding of the Ministry of Culture and its minister, Edward Seaga, who would become a future prime minister, Lewin travelled around the

country and recorded folk songs in the villages. Her work involved collecting, researching, and artistically interpreting Jamaica's folk heritage through primarily Euro-British sensibilities into public performances.⁹³ Drawing from Fela Sowande, Lewin's African theory of sound "as the most potent spiritual force available to him for conscious use"⁹⁴ structures her research. Noting that because enslaved peoples were forbidden from talking to each other, and because it helped them endure the labour, a practice of singing developed: "Singing buoyed up their spirits and served many other purposes in their own interests. Songs became vehicles for communication, passing messages, commenting on situations, and even ridiculing the master and the man with the whip."⁹⁵ Such oppressive conditions favoured music as the source of "ideas, news and comments that could not be spoken,"⁹⁶ and included drumming, rhythms, and dance as additional sources of knowledge formation and transmission.⁹⁷

The tradition of folk music as the vehicle for news, moralizing doctrines, and theorizing social conditions has been featured throughout Jamaican music over time. Carolyn Cooper breaks away from the "high/low=euro/Afrocentric cultural divide"⁹⁸ that defines Lewin's approach to extend the concept of orality and introduce "noise" as the disruptive potential of the lower classes, as well as to reembrace Black women's role in cultural production. The concept of "noise," as Cooper articulates it, illuminates the ways in which the dominant White, male, straight colonial society obscures, dismisses, and polices Black cultural forms and how the notion of "vulgarity" polices Black women's bodies, especially of the lower classes. "One culture's 'knowledge' is another's 'noise.'"⁹⁹ Cooper's redirection of racism's inherent inability to listen to the Other echoes the various scholars and practitioners who point to the gaps in the archives.¹⁰⁰ She uses the metaphor of "blood and bone" to underscore "body" in the body of knowledge and its genealogy/DNA of ideas, "a blood-line of beliefs and practices." Focusing on the body, Cooper relates to the song, not as Lewin does through its meaning and social context, but through the performance of melody, rhythm, and the body in dance and the dancefloor itself."¹⁰¹

Bringing Cooper and Lewin in dancehall together, Peter Manuel and Wayne Marshall note that the recycled "riddims"¹⁰² function similarly to Anansi stories and folk songs as they transform over time

periods and geographies. African “survivals”—gestures, dance, and rhythms—continue into dancehall through rituals and revival references, bending low and reproducing the news.¹⁰³ Scholar and performer Naila Keleta-Mae, for example, uses poetry to document her experiences in Canada, echoing the methods of Louise Bennett and Bailey’s oral-performative texts,¹⁰⁴ while Mark V. Campbell and Carl James locate Akan culture in the creolization of a Toronto dialect.¹⁰⁵

Decolonial and Community Archives

I have tried thus far to lay the foundation for a Black archival framework from the Caribbean and Afrocentric methods of cultural retention and transmission and now turn to debates regarding archival institutions, or the singular nominative term “archives,” with an “s.” As previously indicated, the term “archives” as used by archivists and librarians adhere to distinctions between, on the one hand, records, collections, and fonds, which pertain to archival materials, and on the other hand, archives as buildings or repositories that employ a trained archivist.¹⁰⁶ In contrast, humanities scholars and artists tend to conflate the distinctions and have a far wider definition of what an archives is compared to its use in the archival profession.¹⁰⁷ These debates stem from a foundational observation by Jacques Derrida, who declared, “Nothing is less reliable, nothing is less clear today than the word ‘archive.’”¹⁰⁸ Critical archival frameworks such as decolonial and community archive approaches disrupt the dominant paradigm by including histories of racialized others, recontextualizing archival material with information and perspectives of the peoples represented in the archives by recognizing minor and community archives as sites of important knowledge preservation extending beyond community, and by including “other” methods of archiving.¹⁰⁹ Notably, Caribbean and Black archivists’ interventions extend the range of what is considered records while engaging with the contribution of humanities scholars and philosophers to rethink the signifier of “the archive” while referring to Foucault’s observation of gaps and silences in the archive that preclude (othered) subjected peoples.¹¹⁰

John A. Aarons, Jeanette Bastian, and Stanley Griffin, in their seminal edited volume of essays *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record: An Archives Reader*, point out that “colonialism was archive-dependent from its earliest manifestations.”¹¹¹ Scribal documents, photographs, and, later, audiovisual materials overwhelmingly reflect the perspectives of political and economic elites and preserve the white supremacist ethnographic gaze for posterity.¹¹² Decolonizing the archive, these archivists suggest, should begin with the subject position of the Caribbean people and their communities—the majority of whom are descendants of the enslaved and indentured—distinguishing the kinds of records they produce. Bastian offers the concept of a “community of records” to reflect the dynamic relationship the community has in creating its own records, “where the actions of communities [are] expressed in a wide variety of ways including textual, visual, performative and aural as well as oral.”¹¹³

In the Caribbean, Bastian’s “community of records,” I argue, relate to the African and, later, intercultural, creolized retentions. Historical analysis sheds light on some of these practices. Peter A. Roberts frames creative performative practices of the Caribbean in sport, dance, theatre, storytelling, singing, festivity, etc., as *play* to counter the constructed image of the “happy slave”¹¹⁴ in official archives, reframing these performative acts as methods to resist and survive captivity and enslavement. Play became a bodily communication method across different languages and cultures, forming new traditions through creolization.¹¹⁵ Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson refer to orality to explicate the numerous ways in which new rituals—both religious and everyday—and informal competition constituted social life amongst Black masses in Jamaica.¹¹⁶

The literature on Caribbean archives, however, rarely acknowledges the diasporic nature of the people, thereby omitting “communities of records” in Canada, the United States, and the UK, for instance, as occupying this interstitial space between the nations. This study attempts to address this “undersight” and attend to how the Jamaican diaspora in Canada belongs to the narration of the people as a diaspora within, but challenging the narrative of, the nation-state. As such, this research-creation project counters the nation-centred approach to archival preservation to instead centre an objective around people

belonging to each other or to a geography rather than to the nation-state.¹¹⁷ I argue that the provenance of a “community of records” shows that the records themselves migrate with the people and cannot be confined to national frameworks. A Caribbean “community of records” can represent shared culture across multiple time periods and what Katherine McKittrick calls “black women’s geographies” that “push up against the seemingly natural spaces and places of subjugation, disclosing, sometimes radically, how geography is socially produced and therefore an available site through which various forms of blackness can be understood and asserted.”¹¹⁸ Thus claims to African origins or retentions can illuminate interactions with other diasporas, highlighting how the relationships themselves that diasporic Black women form might be regarded *as* Black archival practice.

Andrew Flinn points out that the gaps in official archives are materials already being collected in communities and traces this practice to local history societies since the seventeenth century, which gained ground throughout the twentieth century in the UK. He notes that the inherent stories of personal artifacts, testimonies, audiovisual materials, as well as documents and personal papers more wholly represent the community’s history. Lacking from Flinn’s thinking, however, is the postcolonial reckoning, what Caswell et al. refer to as “symbolic annihilation,”¹¹⁹ which spurred decolonial community archival institutions such as the Black Cultural Archives in the UK.¹²⁰ This community archive, led by Black British Caribbean people, was founded only in 2014 and attests to a diasporically relational framing of Black archival practice. Canada has no such equivalent, though several projects aim to establish a permanent repository. One of the questions this research raises is whether replications of colonial archives make sense for marginalized people groups in Canada, and specifically for Black and Indigenous peoples. Why reproduce colonial intellectual frameworks of archives, or at the very least, work counter to such paradigms?¹²¹ Why continue to think within the colonial architectures of archives?

Post-custodial models offer a middle ground to colonial archives systems. In this model, the records remain in the community while the archives digitizes and stewards the digital files, as in the case of the South Asian American Digital Archive.¹²² T-Kay Sangwand proposes a post-post-custodial model

that acknowledges the power imbalance across transnational partnerships, namely between the countries and communities in the Global South and North.¹²³ Reading with emerging scholar and Black archivist Jarrett Drake, Michelle Caswell questions the practice of recuperating representation (by filling in gaps in official archives), calling instead for the production of “liberatory archives,” acknowledging the totalizing language of “nation” and power imbalances between official archives and communities. This work responds to such calls for liberation. As a sole researcher working with a community with few resources, I echo Caswell’s urgency for “new kinds of collections and new kinds of organizations to care for them in order to enact liberatory practices.”¹²⁴ More pointedly, however, I want to situate Stanley Griffin within the same breath as the internationally known Caswell, who, in calling attention to white supremacy in the archives and in liberatory work, has benefited enormously by adopting the language of Black feminism and other Black philosophers to arrive at conclusions already known by community members through their lived experience. I therefore return to the Black Caribbean archivist Stanley Griffin, whose similar call for new kinds of archives stems from the new ways everyday Black people adopt digital media to archive as an extension of their embodied practices.

Performative, Embodied, Living Archives

In this section, I trace the development of the concept of embodied archives and its close connection to oral traditions. The recognition of oral traditions as documentary evidence of Indigenous communities raises questions for archivists about the distinctions between archives/records and memory. Archivist Mason A. Jones sketches the debates around definitions and distinctions regarding what memory and archives mean.¹²⁵ Laura Millar’s analysis of records, archives, and memory draws on research on Indigenous oral history and the acceptance of oral history in a landmark legal proceeding in British Columbia. In her article “Touchstones: Considering the Relationship between Memory and Archives,” Millar questions the assumptions around thinking of memory as a metaphor for archives, noting how textual documentary records mirror the ways in which memory works by recording, retrieving, selecting,

and using.¹²⁶ One crucial distinction is that records provoke memories, yet Millar argues that the factual evidence of the text and artifact bolsters the evidence of repeated “collective remembering.” Thus, “records, along with stories, artifacts, songs, rituals, traditions, and myriad other non-documentary touchstones,” have equal weight in terms of veracity and evidentiary substance—they need the “truth” of the archival record to verify their claims.¹²⁷

The problems of White archivist-scholars debating amongst each other how to accommodate records from marginalized communities and cultures simply reinforce the hegemonic paradigms of colonialism and white supremacy in the archives in which they operate.¹²⁸ Cree scholar Dallas Hunt intervenes in the debate by appealing to Indigenous methodologies and using felt analysis, introducing affect through his grandmother’s story in relation to the official records that document her family. Working towards a “decolonial sensibility,” the grandmother’s voice introduces subject agency in tone and content, creating a counterpoint to the ethnographic representations of her and her community. Not only does Hunt raise the disconnect between Indigenous worldviews and a settler-colonial paradigm, but he also turns the question of the veracity of the archival record on its head. It is the grandmother who corrects the record with her story.¹²⁹ Therefore, reading counter to Millar, Hunt exposes the glacial incrementalism of archival debates when communities are left out of the conversation. These scholarly exclusions are not new and are compounded by the well-documented disciplinary boundaries between the humanities and information/archival sciences that continue to erode as each impacts the other.

This research complements and bolsters Indigenous critiques of archival practice in Canada by engaging the concept of “embodied archives.” Joseph Pugliese coined the term to explain the matrix of scientific racism and power by incorporating critical race theory to understand absences in Mediterranean archives. Pugliese draws from W. E. B. Du Bois and photographer Allan Sekula to highlight alternative ways of knowing and recording history:

Escaping the grid of scientificity because of their “naivety,” operating below the radar of erudition, and nonconceptual because corporeal, these other knowledges articulate other ways of being and knowing. In contradistinction to the official archive, the alternative epistemology of the

embodied archive is predicated on *relationality, on the fluid connections between seemingly dissimilar things*.¹³⁰

The embodied archive opens a line of inquiry for diasporic epistemologies built on finding relations between “dissimilar things” like different geographies, creolizations amongst different ethnic groups, traces of “origins” in cultural practices, and so on. For Pugliese, the shadow archive lies not in photographs or institutions, as per Sekula, but in the often ignored “repertoire of gestures, expressions, and practices that are made invisible through the process of lived embodiment”¹³¹ of everyday people.

Building on Pugliese, Paola Zaccaria links the embodied archive to filmic representations of migration, introducing the concept of TransMediterraAtlantic to reinstate Southern Europe’s transatlantic histories. The shadow archive of “odours, languages, bodies and colours, the South”¹³² unlocks contemporary embodied archives of the Arab and Black South in the Mediterranean.¹³³ Zaccaria’s analysis raises the issue of cultural hybridity: What are the sounds, colours, tastes, skin tones, rhythms and dances, domestic and outdoor spaces available to a broad Canadian public derived from the shadow archive of people of Jamaican descent?

I extend the notion of an embodied archive to the Jamaican diaspora by understanding the story as a living archive, as I learned in my work with artist and colleague Adrian Kahgee from Saugeen First Nation.¹³⁴ For example, a carnival performance is a “living cultural archive.”¹³⁵ Stanley Griffin goes even further. He signals that archives of the masses are found in the *noise*: the rhythms executed on drums, dance, language, etc., that characterize Black Caribbean life and celebrations of life.¹³⁶ These movements perform sounds and reverberate across diasporic communities, echoing the concept of embodied archives. Bastian and Griffin regard these performative archives as a necessary intervention into colonial textual and image records to recentre marginalized peoples in the nation’s narrative.

Diana Taylor bridges Latin American and performance studies in her influential text *The Archive and the Repertoire*, which opened a new field regarding the body’s relation to historical records. Through the lens of performance, knowledge production and transmission through embodied practices occur

without recourse to textual interpretation.¹³⁷ This is important because it departs from interpretation through language and instead calls attention to the scenario—the outline of a scenario, the skeleton of a play that invokes our senses and imagination to think situationally about not only the plot but the scene: its smells, sounds, and sights; the “milieux and corporeal behaviours such as gestures, attitudes, and tones not reducible to language.” Indeed, “the scenario makes visible, yet again [because performances can always be repeated], what is already there: the ghosts, the images, the stereotypes.”¹³⁸ However, Taylor distinguishes between the archive (texts, records, images, and other “unchanging” materials) and the live repertoire (performance of memory), a dichotomy that fractures the concept of time into its colonial binary of enduring past and intangible present, processes by which cultural change becomes somewhat fixed through reinterpretations of the repertoire across generations.¹³⁹ Taylor’s attention to oral traditions and folk performances of predominantly Indigenous peoples in Latin America, and how these performances intersect with the gestures of political movements, is particularly poignant to the Caribbean basin because of shared histories of indigenous genocide, chattel slavery, and transculturation. However, despite Taylor’s brief nod to Black presence and contributions to Latin American performance,¹⁴⁰ she over/underlooks how Latin American performances perpetuate anti-Blackness, for instance, through the ubiquitousness of blackface¹⁴¹—even up to the present day. Taylor’s theorizing further omits the ways in which African-descendant populations use whiteface to perform counter to Whiteness in the Caribbean,¹⁴² such as in carnival and, in Jamaica specifically, in Jonkonnu masquerades, a form of musical procession with African origins satirizing plantation owners.¹⁴³

Andre Lepecki refers to the body materially as a substrate to fix choreographic storytelling. In discussing dance choreography, he proposes that the repertoire—defined as knowledge activated through the body—is as much an archive as the documents, records, photos, and artifacts one usually associates with an archive.¹⁴⁴ Reading through Foucault, Lepecki reconfigures the archive to include notions of subjectivity, transformation, imagination, affect, and identity as constitutive elements in a dynamic archival system.¹⁴⁵ In the Canadian context, Ryan Persadie complicates the corporeal archive by engaging

in an intersectional analysis through the lived experience of race, gender, class, nationhood, and (Black) community.¹⁴⁶ Persadie cites the embodied archive as evidence for his claim that cultural appropriation in Canada occurs when Jamaicanness or Caribbeanness is made invisible¹⁴⁷ within Canada's multicultural and/or pan-Africanist solidarities because intragroup sharing is not cited.¹⁴⁸

Christopher Ballengee cites W. E. B. Du Bois's account of listening to a song which is generations old, oblivious to the textual references. Ballengee notes how meaning derives from the African music alone (rhythms, melodies), distinct from the song's lyrics, and how situational the archive of music becomes when applied to new bodies, subjectivities, and geographies. Weaving the necessary movement into the cultural genealogy of music as an archive in the Caribbean and calypso, he relies on Katherine Dunham's observations of the deeply familiar rhythms of the Charleston in Haiti and West Africa. These instances of noticing, I argue, extend beyond what memory does. Recall Hunt's anecdote of his grandmother providing a counternarrative to the photographic and textual "mis"documentation in the archive through the recollection of her childhood. However, Benitz-Rojo, Ballengee, Du Bois, and Dunham indicate that the method of a performative, embodied archiving through music, song, dance, and gesture, as discourse/storytelling, resonates mainly and chiefly as the archive in Black Caribbean peoples. The "archive" to which Taylor refers is the archive of the state and oppressive White classes. The archive of the people is found in what Paul Gilroy calls "neglected modes of signifying practice like mimesis, gestures, kinesis, and costume."¹⁴⁹ Similarly, while referring to Arab cultural traces, Pugliese insists on the importance of the everyday: "Obstinate, fragmented, these shards are in fact repeatedly conjoined and revived through the cultural and corporeal rituals of everyday life: cooking, eating and burying one's dead."¹⁵⁰ These insights map neatly onto Caribbean concepts of creolization and historical preservation in the historical accounting of everyday practices by Moore and Johnson.¹⁵¹

Yvonne Daniel's fieldwork in Afro-Atlantic communities corroborates my argument in this dissertation. In her article, she concludes after many interviews with religious performers that

one of the by-products of these efforts is awareness of stored knowledge within the dancing and music-making body. Over time, the musicians and dancers, those whom I call the “experiential librarians” of ritual practice, become consciously aware of the vast knowledge that exists within African diaspora religious performance.¹⁵²

In these embodied rhythmic knowledges, “experiential librarians store understandings and perspectives inside their bodies. They contemplate and digest the knowledge found in observation, practice, and communal rituals. They sing, drum, and dance the coded and sequenced rhythms of the ancestors and provide opportunities for others to experience and learn.”¹⁵³ Daniels explains the kinds of knowledge encoded into the body through specific movements and rhythms with mathematical sequencing, musical relationships, material working of the instruments, and articulations of the body in physical space, all working to transmit knowledge on another plane of emotional and spiritual dimensions.

I regard embodied information as akin to accounting ledgers, mathematical treatises, and religious texts that together describe and communicate, nonverbally, knowledge about a particular culture. Since this information is stored in a dynamic, organic, even spiritual substrate, Black archival theory must also address the liveness of the archive.

The body in (e)motion—a migrating body, an affective and locomotive body—lends itself to a creative impulse altering the corporeal archive. The term “living archives,” developed by Jamaican theorist Stuart Hall, accommodates how Black and Brown peoples (African and Asian descendants) conceptualize their own histories. The concept rightly assesses the wreckage of colonialism’s archive. It brings together the sonic and embodied fragments to create new meaning out of the affective resonances of the past in the present, linked to the archive’s/the Black person’s futurity. A living archives, then, is what Hall calls a “history from below.”¹⁵⁴ Hall’s introductory speech to the Living Archive Conference expounds upon the concept as an “on-going, never completed project,” as inherently diasporic. Drawing on Foucault’s theorizing of the archive as a discursive formation with heterogeneous materials marked by ruptures in the texts (the gaps, differences, distances, transformations),¹⁵⁵ I suggest these discursive “materials” are the personal stories, anecdotes, theories, and biographies that are potentially reactivated

through “aesthetic, artistic, and interpretive practices.”¹⁵⁶ It is also important to note some of Hall’s earlier thinking about how the preservation of African culture went hand in hand with plain survival under brutality.¹⁵⁷ This latter point is crucial to Black Atlantic archives and extends beyond the cultural, beyond the mnemonic practices and affective traces to consider survival. Living archives are resistant and transformative (not just transforming) and mark the point at which Hall observed that Black filmmakers initiated transformative change. Their films would, in turn, become an archive of their lived experiences of being Black in Britain, in stark contrast to what Pugliese calls the “dead matter” of the official archive.¹⁵⁸

Amalia Sabiescu uses the living archives concept to emphasize the embodied memory in the creative interpretation of texts through artmaking and performance, and emphasizes audience participation and social memory through artworks and the “live” moving image.¹⁵⁹ However, Sabiescu neglects the crucial point about the necessity of performative modes as recordkeeping and record-interpreting practice, as highlighted by Taylor and Hall. Hall insisted that the Black/Asian diasporic experience produced political resistance to national narratives, precipitating diasporic peoples’ creation of their own unending archive. Drawing from Simone Osthoff¹⁶⁰ and building on Hall, Roshini Kempadoo posits the Caribbean archive as an unstable *practice* engaging “technologies and forms that are participatory and performative, seamlessly combining history and fiction.”¹⁶¹ Looking back to how the concept of creolization was framed as a creative process, Kempadoo argues that *creativity* with archival records is integral to the Creole archive as a method to further destabilize colonial paradigms, mirroring visually Saidiya Hartman’s methodology of critical fabulation by (re)constructing Black history affectively in the present.¹⁶² Kempadoo thus frames Creole archives as an unending, heterogeneous, living archive constantly being reshaped through contemporary artistic practice, the result of which becomes itself part of the Creole archive.

A final note on living archives: A Jamaican archival concept would be remiss if it excluded the important Rastafarian concept of “livity,” a livingness given by a divine creative force that puts

everything in relation to resist entrenched “Babylonian” (colonial, neocapitalist, etc.) systems. As Stanley Griffin notes, “The community archives concept can allow the Caribbean’s undocumented, marginalized, and forgotten to ‘put up a real resistance’ and work their way out of the shadows of a forgetful society.”¹⁶³ Living, embodied archives, therefore, work in tandem with the official archive as counterdocumentary evidence to official colonial records.

I wish to further emphasize the importance of the audiovisual record in mediating embodied archives in communities where the performativity of the record is critical to cultural preservation, such as in Indigenous and Black communities. To illuminate the relationship between embodied archives and media, I return to my research questions: What are archives? Moreover, how would a repository function based on the ontology of the records? These questions arose in response to official archives’ digitized collections of the Caribbean, which are widely accessible online and include photographs, audio recordings, and archival film.¹⁶⁴

Paula Amad’s framing of the “counter”-archive, which centres the everyday in the audiovisual archive, contextualizes film’s disruption of the print archive by claiming that film documents more than what the camera-holder perceives as the subject. In so doing, a film can, sometimes inadvertently, record the presence of the Other.¹⁶⁵ Amad’s decolonial motivations buttress the argument of the counter-archive: “The glaring gaps in cinema’s historical record do not constitute a handicap for history but a challenge to produce a more sensitive historiography that moves beyond the historicist myth of the all-knowing, sovereign archive.”¹⁶⁶ There is potential for counternarratives, even in mainstream audiovisual archives, to find representations of the marginalized lower classes, the raced, the closeted, and the cross-dressed hiding in plain sight in the accidental documentation of everyday life.¹⁶⁷ What is at stake is a “written” record yet to be produced around these records. As Amad states, “Technologies of reproduction were central to the modern revelation of the ordinary as extraordinary.”¹⁶⁸ Community archive projects such as this help to collectively constitute narratives resistant to the “all-knowing, sovereign archive,” but this

project departs from the primacy of historiography to offer creative intervention and community—a Creole archive—as the counternarrative.

Home movies form part of this counternarrative. Zimmerman and Ishizuka argue that “home movies constitute an imaginary archive that is never completed, always fragmentary, vast, and infinite,” which they further describe as “transnational in character, a depository of linkages among nations, communities, politics, identities, and families.”¹⁶⁹ This rings true for the Jamaican diasporic archive: Family photographs do much of this work of linking, but so do community-produced VHS tapes made by professionals and entrepreneurs in the community. I want to bring these community videos into conversation with home movies precisely because so few home movies exist, or at least exist for the public. Film was practically nonexistent for communities marked by economic challenges, whereas VHS cameras and players became more economically accessible in the 1980s. These VHS tapes put forth counternarratives similar to Jacqueline Stewart’s South Side Home Movie Project in Chicago, an archival and community engagement program founded in 2005 that inspires this dissertation project.

The family films archived by the SSHMP illustrate vigorous effort on the part of black families to show themselves living well, loving their families, supporting their communities, and traveling across the country and around the world. Like all home movies, this footage not only documents concrete places and historical moments but also displays more ephemeral practices such as glances and smiles, dances and hugs, cooperative poses and skeptical disdain for the camera. Home movie *mise-en-scène* is replete with objects, some placed by the filmmakers and their families (e.g., home decor), many outside of their control (e.g., elements of street and other public scenes).¹⁷⁰

Home movies, therefore, crack open Taylor’s dichotomy of the archive and the repertoire to better understand the “instabilities” and “incongruities”¹⁷¹ with which the moving image challenges the official archive. Working with film archives in a Jamaican diasporic context involves working with Black Caribbean subjectivities, ancestors, and ghosts, and a certain deference to the spirits is necessary when working with the material and its projected surfaces. For this reason, the use of “ingredients” such as rum and medicinal plants in the culture counter a purely positivist approach to this research. I instead suggest that rum, medicinal plants, and other nonhuman substances are also participants in the research, offering

their own perspectives on the archive. In the chapter on methodology, I delve into process cinema and the particularities of relinquishing some control of the process. This method, I argue, allows the plants to create their own images in dialogue with the chemical components and the human hand.

I want to end this section on critical archival theory and media's troubling of the archive by turning specifically to sound and preservation practices. Sound and music surface most prominently in Jamaican archives—embodied, mediated, living—and warrant special mention. Elizabeth Watson argues that to preserve the *methods* of oral traditions and not just the content, “sound archives serve to prevent cultural amnesia” and “are the backbone for work in researching a community's/culture's soundscape.”¹⁷² Olive Lewin's research attests to the importance of an audio archive's continuity in the diaspora, which was then interpreted for stage performances for nation-building purposes under the presumption that folk self-representation in the archives would change the very nature of the colonial archives that independent countries continued to maintain.¹⁷³ Her work is reinterpreted in different international performances and VHS recordings through the repertoire of the Heritage Singers Canada, who comprise one of my focus groups, by activating Lewin's audio recordings as well as her arrangements and performances in contrapuntal soundscapes in both Canada and internationally.¹⁷⁴ The HSC is an example of how syncretic practices helped the members adjust to living in Canada, resulting in an expansion of their repertoire to include Black Canadian spirituals and folks songs from the countries they toured.¹⁷⁵

Relating sounds to the body, sound historian Jonathan Sterne argues that “the history of sound provides some of the best evidence for a dynamic history of the body because it traverses the nature/culture divide: it demonstrates that the transformation of people's physical attributes is part of cultural history”¹⁷⁶ as “an artifact of the messy and political human sphere.”¹⁷⁷ His argument pays attention to the dynamism of sound's social/political aspects, indicating meaning beyond the lyrical content and pointing to the experience of listening to what materials evoke sound as well as the materiality of sound. He therefore pays attention to the technologies of sound, the act of recording and playback, and the specific archival practices required to preserve and play back sounds, including those of

the dead. These preservation processes echo how the treatment of the body changed during industrialization, with similar processes of “canning and embalming.”¹⁷⁸ Sterne’s reference to the body further emphasizes the liveness of the dead when working with archives. Once embodied, sounds transform into another technological body, but they continue to live within a time-based medium. Working with archives of the dead, therefore, requires acknowledging, abiding by, and perhaps even creating new protocols with communities still close to the dead.

Black Feminism

When I think of Black women, I think of the carework of the living and the dead. Black women’s labour in childcare and, subsequently, nursing in Canada was a condition of entry to the country. Caring for White people’s families was a way to gain entry to the country, but also to send money home to care for grandmothers who, in turn, cared for the children these women left behind.¹⁷⁹ As a Caribbean woman, I want to start here in this space of carework in engaging Black feminism as a frame with which to assemble a Jamaican diasporic archive. In this section, I also address the liberatory nature of intersectional work that draws attention to Black women’s subjectivities as central to who we are as Jamaican Canadians.

The Combahee River Collective manifesto canonized Black feminism in the academy. The manifesto developed out of the shared lived experience of Black women as the starting point for theorizing Black women’s lives. The manifesto articulates the degree to which Black women are subjugated by a white supremacist, sexist, classist society, yet seeks ways to care for each other and thrive despite all odds. The collective theorized subjugation under white supremacy and Black men’s patriarchal worldviews, postulated collective care as a liberatory practice to perform resistance and ensure survival, and critiqued White feminism’s goal for parity with White men. The genesis of intersectional analysis is also first articulated in this manifesto.¹⁸⁰

Kimberlé Crenshaw coined the term “intersectionality” to examine the multiplicity of social relations and subjective perspectives that help to identify how systemic policies and practices affect the most marginalized.¹⁸¹ Patricia Collins drew linkages between theorizing and social justice activism as the work of intersectionality in which grassroots activists and the most highly decorated scholars all contribute to the development of theory. Her approach to theory-building mirrors bell hooks’s call to induce the kind of care required towards just change.¹⁸² bell hooks helps me think through community as pedagogy, by which I mean that teaching involves the recognition of community as an epistemological site. The method of teaching, then, involves learning with and through community to produce collective modes of inquiry and knowing. Within this philosophy of teaching community, hooks advocates for the importance of affective relations to feed the spirit of both scholarly and community work. In other words, hope, love, and respect are fostered within communities to make space for freedom.¹⁸³ This research-creation project similarly aspires to do this carework theoretically and practically in community.

While I draw heavily from Black American feminism, I rely on Caribbean feminism’s emphasis on transnationality and difference in race and class; its poetics and diasporic locations, which Miss Lou’s poetry articulates;¹⁸⁴ and its focus on family, though not necessarily a normative one.¹⁸⁵ Caribbean women’s particularity lies in what Janet Momsen refers to as the double paradox of “patriarchy within a system of matrifocal and matrilocal families; and of domestic and state patriarchy coexisting with the economic.”¹⁸⁶ Barbara Bush’s investigation into enslaved women articulates that Black women were multiply oppressed through patriarchy and White womanhood, yet still developed resistive practices that continue to resonate in Caribbean society today. She notes that “the greater the human degradation, the more fierce was the desire to exercise free will, and this was crucial to [Black women’s] survival.”¹⁸⁷ Beyond personal and community survival through their children and carework, Black women’s resistance ensured the survival of African culture even under the process of creolization. Departing from Momsen, Bush debunks the myth that matrifocality dominated slave society and instead argues that “the matrifocal family, where it existed, was *linked to cultural retention*, rather than evidence of pathological

development reflecting sexual and social instability.”¹⁸⁸ Put differently, Caribbean women exert considerable agency and power in navigating patriarchal society, setting up informal economic and familial arrangements to the benefit of their (transnational) families and themselves, and playing a central role in cultural retention. Moreover, in a society where Black and Brown women have always worked, liberation was never about a woman’s right to work but about living wages and ethical workplaces. Louise Bennett, a critical Black Caribbean feminist overlooked within mainstream Black feminism, offered biting critiques of colonialism, class, race, and patriarchy in her doublespeak poetry performances.¹⁸⁹

Caribbean feminists further address the multiple cultures that came into contact with each other and the different unions that resulted under these circumstances, reproducing racial hierarchies under slavery, referred to as colourism. It is important to note here the complex choices Black women had (or did not have) and that stratification along the lines of pigmentation resulted from sexual exploitation of Black women, where they had limited choice, decisions to create unions with White men to help their families, for self-interest and material gain; it is these choices that my great-great-grandmothers Eliza Battick, on my mother’s side, and Katherine “Gong Gong” Gayle, on my father’s, would have experienced.¹⁹⁰ The logics of racial capitalism imparted privileges to lighter-skinned people,¹⁹¹ and these persist in contemporary post-slavery societies,¹⁹² including Canada.

I embrace the liberatory work of Black American feminism to help think with, love with, and care with community,¹⁹³ but I rely on Caribbean feminism’s emphasis on transnationality as another juncture of identitarian positioning and what Shaunasea Brown calls an “ethics of collective care.” Brown contends that poetry “allows us to articulate different realities that would likely go unstated in other contexts.”¹⁹⁴ These realities require, Brown argues, tending to wider ranges of intersections that constitute silences within Blackness. An ethics of collective care includes how dis(ability) and expansive concepts of gender might operate as liberatory positionalities to disturb spatiotemporal and even material-spiritual boundaries. I want to forge a connection between Sekula’s shadow archive and Andrea Davis’s discussion

of the trope of the sea, in which the histories of Caribbean Indigenous peoples are restored as active memory and the diasporic histories of African and Indian descent are intertwined. Her “rememory”¹⁹⁵ emerges from the embodied histories of the islands, its original inhabitants, and its migrations of people forcibly exiled to the plantations. In describing her experience of the Elmina Slave Castle in Ghana, Davis advances the concept of “rememory” as a methodology to “acknowledge the ways in which one’s capacity to relate to the past exceeds a linear relationship with history. A rememory, therefore, is relational.”¹⁹⁶ The interweaving of a body with place triggers a generative process to reveal the shadow archive within oneself, if only initially through interpretation and imagination.

The shadow archive is most evident when Davis refers to M. NourbeSe Philip’s poetry and performance, which gives voice to enslaved ancestors thrown overboard: “Yet, the sea, by allowing Philip to mourn—to be attentive to the wake—and by allowing the lost to resurface and speak, provides possibilities for renewal.”¹⁹⁷ Philip’s creative intervention in the textual colonial archive using contrapuntal rhythms and concrete poetry methods reinstates the living Creole archive after the disembodiment of the slave ship. But it is her attentiveness to the wake, with its affective charge and its duty to a sense of care, that corresponds to Tina Campt’s methodology of listening to images. I thus suggest a collective care ethic that includes an implicit protocol for working with Black archives that awakens a spiritual-phenomenological stance alongside a deciphering practice which draws critical attention to the counter-signifying practices and counternarratives of Black artists.¹⁹⁸

Compounding Time

I have attempted thus far to sketch the contours of Black/Caribbean theoretical and social concerns that shape the distinctiveness of Jamaican archives. In this section, I centre Black feminist conceptualizations of time as a refusal of dominant modernist constructions of progressive linearity.

Dionne Brand, in *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging*, conveys how Black people enter a room with the history of slavery and the Middle Passage marked on and in the body:

The door casts a haunting spell on personal and collective consciousness in the Diaspora. Black experience in any modern city or town in the Americas is a haunting. One enters a room and history follows; one enters a room and history precedes. History is already seated in the chair in the empty room when one arrives. Where one stands in a society seems always related to this historical experience. Where one can be observed is relative to that history. All human effort seems to emanate from this door. How do I know this? Only by self-observation, only by looking. Only by feeling. Only by being a part, sitting in the room with history.¹⁹⁹

For Brand, history endures as a feeling and knowing in Black people that one's presence is always already understood within the extant forms of oppression and violence in what Saidya Hartman calls the afterlife of slavery.²⁰⁰

Pointing to the future, kara lynch and Henriette Gunkel unsettle western concepts of time: "Think about black futures as a practice that pulls from the past to imagine the future—as well as the collectivity of those who dreamed our lives for us before we arrived; how will we both enact these present-futures they imagined and do the same for those who follow us?"²⁰¹

While Afrofuturism, as an aesthetic, filters through this research, what is of interest here is the role of an imagined community, transcending spatiotemporal boundaries, that articulates the Black diasporic experience of embodied knowing and sense of history, as suggested by Brand, and visioning as a practice to bring a liberatory future into being.

A future directed towards freedom in the present underpins Andrea Davis's concept of "future now" to frame the historical conjuncture of our contemporary moment. Marked by difference, in the urgency of liberatory desires between first generations and 1.5 and second generations living in the Jamaican diaspora in Canada,²⁰² "future now" considers the cumulative impact of state and systemic violence and the subjective response of "the desire to live as one might choose to *be*."²⁰³ Liberatory justice for these generations does not include the subjugation of Indigenous and Black peoples and instead builds solidarities intersectionally and nonhierarchically across gender, sexuality, ability, and class beyond nationhood. "Future now," therefore, theorizes a *relational* social justice already being narrated, visualized, and made audible by a wide range of artist-activists. Davis, therefore, underscores a Caribbean worldview necessarily linking Caribbean and African women's liberatory futures outside the logics of

settler colonialism and in relation to Indigenous peoples. “Future now” provides this research with a framework for thinking about artistic activations of embodied archives as a method to envision the future.

Black Archival Futures Now

I sit currently in a studio at Feminist Art Retreat (FAR), which acts as a communal space, one from which the trans scholar-artist Syrus Marcus Ware has worked. If I step out onto the deck and peer to the right, I see the Garden of Future Blackness. I am compelled to weed and help maintain this Black garden.

Wrenching several stalks of Queen Anne’s lace out of the black soil and the black mulch, I leave the dark purples and black hollyhocks to grow and recede. I pull the crabgrass along its edges to redefine the garden’s shape of a Sankofa symbol, a mythical bird flying forwards, its head turned backwards and holding an egg to signal towards a future.²⁰⁴ The purple butterfly weed stand droops next to the stands of wild butterfly weed that is seeded in the garden. I leave those to nurture the monarchs returning to Mexico and the Caribbean. Maybe they’ll return to munch on the milkweed in Treasure Beach, where my family comes from.

I am reminded of the third impetus driving this research, which addresses the vital importance of this archive. The constant movement and migrations of the Black Caribbean diaspora have almost entirely followed disaster and catastrophe. The transatlantic slave trade, hurricanes, earthquakes, political violence, economic collapse. We came to Canada with a couple of suitcases of clothes and shipped fibre barrels of housewares. I said goodbye to my grandparents over a cup of sweet mint tea, the leaves picked from their bush. Hurricane Ivan destroyed most of the family photos. My cousins put the remainder into safekeeping before Hurricane Beryl hit in July 2024. I had just moved my aunt from that house to a nursing home, and not all of her items had yet been sorted through. The winds and rain destroyed the papers and receipts of surveys and title to the land. The bedroom walls where she slept collapsed as the roof caved in. She would have been killed. I am left with the task of writing down the oral histories I gathered on my last visit that describe the land for the purpose of surveying and titling. My cousin and I

decoded what “up a top,” “down a bottom,” and “down in Eden” meant in terms of location and acreage by walking on the land. Now I am in the position of having to return to recount that oral history and walk the land with the surveyor to define, on foot, the oral history references. My aunt also belongs to this history in Canada as one who worked here and returned to the island. Her plan was always to return to Canada, but instead she was satisfied watching CTV news on satellite feed. I wonder if Beryl spared those large milkweed plants at the edge of Treasure Beach’s shore, so the monarchs here at FAR make it back there to survive the winter.

These archives contribute to a complex identity formation, not in terms of a nation-state—Jamaica or Canada—but in terms of referencing the geographical and social spaces of Xamayca and Turtle Island, the islands and archipelago to which we belong. Drawing from sound theorists, Davis offers the concept of “sound travel” as one avenue for artists to exceed political boundaries, racial ceilings, and panoptic and aesthetic policing. I want to draw parallels as well to the 1.5 and second generation of Black British creatives Stuart Hall observed in the 1970s to 1990s,²⁰⁵ who share affinities with what Davis observes in Toronto specifically, as a place of art- and music-making “where Black women are rarely included in the discourses of citizenship; where Black communities on Indigenous land are being made to disappear; and where diversity, when celebrated, is constructed as male, anti-Black, and upwardly mobile.” I frame this research as contemporary resistive practice alongside the Black women who sound freedom into being now in producing acts of “a more liveable version” than previous generations.²⁰⁶

CHAPTER 3

Methodology

Research Problematic and Context

This dissertation project addresses a lack in official archives in Canada, and in Ontario particularly. The dearth of records of the Jamaican diaspora is matched by the dispersal of records across various institutions, making it virtually impossible for community members and researchers alike to gain a comprehensive view of what records there are. Many of the records that do exist emerged from colonial, white supremacist paradigms of the archival practice of appraisal, preservation, description, and access. My research questions problematize archival practice and the representation of Black peoples in archives by asking: What are archives (defined as a collection of records) in the communities of Black Jamaicans? What form would an archives (not plural, but an institution) take if its architecture, procedures, and processes best embodied these records (archives plural)?²⁰⁷ How can we bring these embodied records together in conversation with each other and make it easy for communities to access their own records? I undertake this dissertation using research-creation as a creative and qualitative methodology to generate and mobilize archives (the data) in this community. Dionne Brand makes clear that a personal and collective consciousness defines our diasporic being, all of us connected to the break from Africa. To know oneself is to actively participate in the *making*, and in so doing, relink to that history through self-observation, looking, feeling, and sitting with history. This research is the assembling of a new community archive to disquiet the archives with untold stories. As a member of this community, I situate myself within this research as a Black and Hakka Jamaican Canadian. The methods by which the research-creation methodology advances are (1) archival research, (2) Caribbean approaches to participatory interviews, (3) remediation, and, finally, (4) process cinema. The remediation of the archives will culminate in a media sculpture called *NansiRoachy*.

The latest 2021 Census of Population provided some statistical insights into the research context. The census showed that over one in eight Black people living in Canada have Jamaican roots, over half of which are second generation. Jamaicans account for the fifth largest diasporic population in the world, with over 36 percent of Jamaicans living outside of the island, and one of the largest Jamaican populations, just over 16 percent of all diaspora, living in Canada.²⁰⁸ In turn, more than 80 percent of all Jamaicans in Canada live in Ontario. More than half live in Toronto and the Greater Toronto Area,²⁰⁹ as well as municipalities a little farther north in Brampton, Alliston, and Shelburne. In 2006, Jamaicans comprised over 30 percent of all Black Canadians. While the population seems small in real numbers compared to a vast White majority, Jamaicans have an outsized influence on the culture, sports, and policies of Canada. Yet what the latest census exposed was the increasingly difficult socioeconomic environments faced by second and third generations. They are markedly worse off than previous generations, underscoring not only a subjective sense of unbelonging of Black people in Canada but also the social and economic realities of marginalization.²¹⁰

This Jamaican diasporic archive intervenes in the productive tension between a Black archives framing and specific ethnocultural differences within Blackness. Inspired by Jamaica's post-independence archival focus on intangible heritage in the Jamaica Memory Bank,²¹¹ this archive gathers together the embodied, performative, living records of oral histories and traditions: dance, gesture, songs, rhythms, and music. I adopt a research-creation methodology to assemble the archive by collecting intangible heritage through audiovisual media. Some of this heritage is already documented on VHS tapes, audio cassettes, CDs, photographs, and conventional textual records, including family narratives, administrative, promotional, and print media. The research creates new audiovisual material to document the intangible heritage of this first and second generation of post-independence Jamaican immigrants contributing to an emerging culture in Canada.²¹²

Importantly, Hall's "living archives" concept features visual artistic production and media technology as discursive instruments to address the challenges diasporas face in a dominant society.²¹³

The concept illuminates how creative practice might rupture mainstream archival practice to open a forum for debate and interpretation in public space. Whereas a written dissertation lacks the performativity of a media archive, such ruptures involve novel research methods to account for the affective, vibrant nature of a Caribbean archive.²¹⁴ I adopt a research-creation methodology in order to preserve these affects and to reimagine archival practice through a Jamaican diasporic lens. In this chapter, I articulate the overall methodology and then describe the artistic and community-based methods involved in this reimagining of an archives.

Research-Creation

Research-creation, as a term, emerged out of the institutional and funding framework of the Canada Council and Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council to acknowledge the ways in which artistic creation constitutes a methodology of knowledge production parallel to academic writing.²¹⁵ Cognates to the Canadian term include ethno-mimesis,²¹⁶ a form of participatory artmaking; and practice-based and arts-based research, used in the US and Australia, adopted from methods in medical and arts therapy fields, respectively.²¹⁷ In dialogue with the Canadian concept of research-creation are action research methodologies such as feminist participatory action research, which is oriented towards social justice and privileges an ethics of care; and sensory ethnography,²¹⁸ which recognizes the body's epistemological and affective entanglement with the subject and surroundings. Each methodology demonstrates varying emphases on the role of art, the artist, the researcher, and community, aspects which can sit comfortably within the concept of research-creation, as articulated by Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk.

Chapman and Sawchuk theorize “creation-as-research” as constitutive of the entire research *and* the entire creation process, from initial investigations to development and presentation.²¹⁹ This concept opens up possibilities to harness counternarrative, disobedient,²²⁰ and undisciplined²²¹ methods to “tell old stories in new/old ways as collaborative, multimodal trajectories breaking the bounds of the institution.”²²²

Research-creation can thus be read as a methodological and epistemological challenge to the argumentative form(s) that have typified much academic scholarship. In research-creation approaches, the theoretical, technical, and creative aspects of a research project are pursued in tandem, and quite often, scholarly form and decorum are breached and breached in the name of experimentation.²²³

In an effort to further define a seemingly boundaryless approach, the authors articulated four categories, or “family resemblances,” of research-creation in a foundational text: (1) research-for-creation, which separates data gathering from the creation of a work representative of the research; (2) research-from-creation, in which the data studies are generated from the creative act, be it a performance, interactive artwork, development of a prototype, etc.; (3) creative presentations of traditional academic research, which mobilize the interpretative possibilities of the aesthetic form; for example, the performance lecture; and, finally, (4) creation-as-research, in which creative practice is required for research to emerge: “It is about investigating the relationship between technology, gathering and revealing through creation while also seeking to extract knowledge from the process.”²²⁴ Important here is the creative process unfolding through skilled making and the use of tools and technologies.

Efforts in defining research-creation underscore the phenomenological paradigm under which the methodology operates. Research-creation invites open-ended outcomes, relational knowledge generation, and situatedness in an embodied community while engaging critical, intersectional, disobedient, decolonizing strategies that arc towards a social justice impact. As previously stated, a written dissertation cannot entirely convey the community’s rich articulation and explanation of the data they generate, nor facilitate the speculative interpretations and analyses that artworks unlock. Yet the methodology suffers from misrecognition by the academy as a suspect, if indeed a nonviable and nonverifiable, methodology predisposed to positivist approaches. The onus, therefore, still lies on the researcher to justify not only the type of knowledge generated but how it is collated and presented.²²⁵ In the early 2000s, Roshini Kempadoo highlighted these very tensions that occur when objectives of decolonizing the institution through “creative practice research” butt heads with academic paradigms and scholarly recognition,²²⁶ and

Natalie Loveless concurred over ten years later, noting the discrete ranges of acceptability regarding the disciplinary methods presented to a researcher.²²⁷

Contemporary writing on research-creation demonstrates a shift in the academy. In revising their previous French-language article on the topic of research-creation, Cynthia Noury and Louis-Claude Paquin revisit performativity as a research-creation form of writing. They refuse to define and confine research-creation to modernist paradigms of knowability and instead choose to simply distinguish research-creation from other research and other creative practices facetiously by “oversimplifying their conclusion”: “Research-creation as we currently understand it in the academic context amounts to doing research *through/within* creative practice, rather than alongside, around or for it.”²²⁸ Their article further insists that conventional textual publication can walk the line between academic standards and decolonizing institutional conventions. For instance, Brad Haseman notes that while institutional requirements necessitate academic rigour such as peer review, disciplinarity (though more broadly construed), and publication, research-creation outputs receive broader acceptance in the academy and include other forms of publication such as a public exhibition and gatherings, to use two examples.²²⁹

If Chapman and Sawchuk acknowledge some historical precedents for the methodology,²³⁰ Loveless²³¹ and Māori scholar Lisa Tuhiwai Smith remind us that the methodology has existed since time immemorial outside of Western/White-sanctioned institutions and academics. Informed by the writings of Frantz Fanon and other Black radical scholars, Smith outlined the stakes of resurgent Black and Indigenous methodologies within the academy and their decolonizing effect on the institution, in turn catalyzing knock-on effects in the wider society.

The project of creating is about transcending the basic survival mode through using a resource or capability that every Indigenous community has retained throughout colonization—the ability to create and be creative. The project of creating is not just about the artistic endeavours of individuals, but about the spirit of creating that Indigenous communities have exercised over thousands of years. Imagination enables people to rise above their own circumstances, to dream new visions and to hold on to old ones. It fosters inventions and discoveries, facilitates simple improvements to people’s lives and uplifts our spirits. Creating is not the exclusive domain of the rich, not of the technologically superior, but of the imaginative. Creating is about channelling collective creativity in order to produce solutions to Indigenous problems. Every Indigenous

community has considered and come up with various innovative solutions to problems. That was before colonialism. Throughout the period of colonization Indigenous peoples survived because of their imaginative spirit, their ability to adapt and to think around a problem.

Indigenous communities also have something to offer the non-Indigenous world.²³²

Smith notes that creativity bolsters the faculty of imagination to propel dreams, affects, spiritual experiences, oral traditions, lived experience, and the like as knowledge-generating tools that can lead to technical innovation. Kathleen M. Ryan and David Staton echo Smith's point regarding the role of technology in interactive documentary (storytelling) and argue for the viability of this tool to engage in decolonial practice-based research.²³³ The Smith quote further signals the parallel ways in which creative practice stimulates knowledge creation in Indigenous and Black communities—rather than positioning the outcome as discoveries of academic researchers.

Smith's inclusion of the work of artists and craftspeople in keeping and generating knowledge mirrors Caribbean Guyanese scholar Walter Rodney's reference to artisanal traditions such as metalworking, pottery, jewelry, and the like as epistemological, technological, economic, and religious practices.²³⁴ Rodney, therefore, establishes a continuum of making-as-research that survives with African peoples during the transatlantic slave trade to the Caribbean.²³⁵ As an insider-outsider to the research, I offer a Caribbean form of creativity—creolization—to the decolonial ethos of the methodology. Creolization refers to creativity in the form of syncretic practices, remixing, combining, making-do, survivance, and thrivance.²³⁶ I therefore position my research as a decolonizing, African-descendant, Indigenous-influenced methodology within the academy.

Research-creation allows this project to dialogue with archivist-scholar Stanley Griffin's advocacy for reimagining Caribbean archives from basic principles born out of the ways in which Caribbean peoples document their own history. Griffin argues that the rethinking of basic principles must better align with Jamaica's own digital futures.²³⁷ This research-creation project answers this call for a rethinking of archives, but in the diaspora. Research-creation helps me to answer these questions by highlighting records of Black Jamaicans with existing collections in archives, and weaving them together

with the dynamic nature of a performative archive. I argue that a community archives (the institution/architecture/structure) should operate along the same logics of the diaspora's mode of preserving records, which is a "living archive(s)." There is no sense in reproducing an institutional archives—something inaccessible from the perspective of the community and interpreted by a singular (colonial) narrative.²³⁸ To subject such records to a static, stationary collection defies the purpose of creating this community archives in the first place.

Since this dissertation project requires the use of various analogue and digital technologies, I want to take the opportunity to stress the importance of considering the social construct of race—and the Black subjects of this research—in regard to the question of what technologies are appropriate to the project. Race and representation always already structure questions of the belonging and citizenship of Jamaicans in Canada and have long been areas of research and debate regarding in the study of still and moving images. In Canada, the textual, illustrative, photographic, and cinematic representations of Black peoples are largely harmful, save for a few fonds and corrective measures archives are taking. Fonds such as the Alan D. McCurdy fonds, Mary Ann Shadd Cary collection, Louise Bennett-Coverley fonds, Jean Augustine fonds, and Lincoln Alexander fonds constitute resistive collections that insert Black and Black Caribbean histories into Ontario archives. In this section, I discuss race and representation in terms of the relationship between the Black body and mediation. I highlight the potential of media-making apparatuses to resist harmful and missing archives, and to counter or remediate a racist historical record.

Black Archival Subjects

While attuned to how race and technology intersect, Wendy Chun and Beth Coleman note how the two collapse into each other. Chun argues that

focusing on race *as* a technology, as *mediation* [emphases mine], thus allows us to see the continuing function of race, regardless of its essence. Race's mediation of the black body in cinema also highlights the fact that race has never been simply biological or cultural, but rather a means by which both are established and negotiated.²³⁹

Thus, race and technology operate as integrated tools to construct the Other. Coleman draws on Bernard Stiegler to theorize race as a quality of the human denatured from the body, and as a mobile agent used to justify dehumanization. Coleman argues that race as technology distances race from the subject's identity and instead assigns race to an *extension* of the body—a prosthesis or tool. The Black subject then has the *potential* (though not guarantee) to demonstrate agency and operationalize the tool of race towards the work of freedom.²⁴⁰ While Coleman's theory of race corresponds neatly with digital languages and the use of race encoded in AI, it is in her postscript on Black temporality and her engagement with the work of James Snead that I find the most generative lines of inquiry, which provide a rationale for applying her theory to more material, analogue, and performative processes. Black artists, expansively defined to include both professional artists and the everyday artists that use creative ways to refashion their environment, such as community organizers, careworkers, caregivers, builders, educators, grocery store clerks, etc., mobilize around race as technology by developing new Black Caribbean tempos, or more specifically, Black Jamaican rhythms as visual/musical/technical/performative outputs. These syncopated, out-of-time rhythms disrupt the techniques and procedural tools of anti-Black racism within the socio-cultural-legal apparatuses of Toronto and geographically wider locations. Indeed, Jamaicans' influence has been widely noted, particularly in music and culture, nursing, and organizing and activism.²⁴¹ In affective correspondence with Frantz Fanon's observation that White people use race to project their Other onto Blackness,²⁴² I imagine race not just as a mask but as a screen (a tool) by which subversive methods of creation counter these projected images of harmful racial stereotypes.

I bring Chun's and Coleman's arguments together to suggest that the Black subject uses the body itself as a media technology. If race is a tool, then the body remediates race by preserving historically how formerly enslaved African and Afro-Creole peoples and their descendants subverted racial projections onto their subjectivities by nurturing the sense of who they were and are through the transmission of stories, movements, and rhythms across generations.²⁴³

Reading alongside Stanley Griffin, I suggest Jamaican archives are indeed found in the rhythms²⁴⁴—in the temporal patterns of communication inherently tied to the body’s movement. These culturally specific Black rhythms travel, to an extent, with the migration of the people and collectively preserve historical information about those migrations. Choreographies of the body are the Foucauldian discourses of knowledge, but preserved in temporal storage units that proved resilient against enslavement, criminalization, and death “like a series of Joseph Cornell boxes—amalgamations of detritus that have been previously assembled into a new order of meaning.”²⁴⁵ This project records and assembles the Black Jamaican living archive in time-based media through film cameras, mobile cameras, and digital audio recorders to facilitate the creation of counternarratives against White projections in institutional records. Writing alone could not convey the rich sensory archive comprised of the sounds, movements, colours, and affective expressions of a Black community resisting the ways in which a white supremacist society socially and economically oppresses.

Having discussed the methodology of research-creation and addressed race in relation to technology and the Black subject, I turn now to a description and analysis of my research methods.

Methods

Research-creation requires specific artistic methods and techniques to realize an outcome. As an archival project, this research aims to preserve as much data as possible in the process and in its original form; furthermore, it aims to preserve how that data was collected. Provenance is the basis of conventional archival practice, and the reproduction of the archival process in this counter-archival dissertation maintains the provenance of the records of the community members who participated. I restate here the following methods to produce the counter-archive: (1) remediation, (2) archival research, (3) Caribbean participatory methods/semiformal interviews, and (4) process cinema. Though the four methods weave in and out of each other in practice, the categories elicit important distinctions worth noting. The multimodal

data these methods produce takes the form of stories, oral traditions, affects, movements, and sounds, emphasizing the orality, viscosity, and performativity endemic to the archive.

1) Remediation

Richard Grusin adopted the term “remediation” “to complicate the notion of ‘repurposing’ as a way to theorize the new meanings engendered by intentional juxtaposition and alternate reuses of heterogenous media formats.”²⁴⁶ Remediation, therefore, distinguishes a functionalist approach to repurposing media from an artistic method aimed at producing new knowledge. He further developed the concept in conjunction with Jay David Bolter to deliberate the logics of immediacy and hypermediacy together. According to Bolter and Grusin, remediation refers to the presentation of one medium in another. It occurs by developing new media to bring more immediacy to a subject in another mediated form. This leads to a “hypermediated” environment of multiple layers of mediation, in which digital new media processes intensify.²⁴⁷ As a creative, practice-based method to engage with archives (older forms of media), remediation refashions—or creatively recycles—older media as it “borrows, modifies, samples, and remixes existing content, forms and expressions to create new works, relationships, interactions and meanings.”²⁴⁸ Counter-archival remediation practice corresponds aptly to Caribbean modalities of “errantry,” by which diasporic wanderings produce poetics of relation to new environments.²⁴⁹ These encounters with one’s environment are first mediated through the body, then through photographs and video in different formats which are juxtaposed together when shared through the media sculpture *NansiRoachy*.

I borrow the idea of the body as a camera—the medium and technology—from Bolter and Grusin while thinking through race as technology: “We are that which the film or television camera is trained on, and at the same time we are the camera itself”²⁵⁰—that is, we have our own lenses and ways in which we relate to representations of the world and ourselves. Media technologies, then, whether analogue or digital, offline or networked, remediate our bodies and our identities. Remediation of the body and its representations then becomes a method by which collective identities can be arrived at through the

individual self.²⁵¹ This is nothing new—we see this in racist-nationalist propaganda abetted by film technologies, with devastating outcomes.²⁵² However, remediation challenges the viewer to read race differently.

The notion of “living archives,” developed by Stuart Hall and engaged in Kempadoo’s and Sabiescu’s work, brings together the intangible, performative archives of the body through artworks that use new media to remediate.²⁵³ My research echoes Derrida’s “archive fever”²⁵⁴ or Hal Foster’s “archival impulse”²⁵⁵ as a creative method to situate everyday lived experience. In this diasporic community, I refashion the past by digitizing VHS tapes and photographs through Archive/Counter-Archive’s Cinemobilia²⁵⁶ and place these archives together with the embodied archives newly remediated on film and video.

Indeed, Bolter and Grusin argue that “the logic of hypermediacy, expressed in digital multimedia and networked environments, suggests a definition of self whose key quality is not so much ‘being immersed’ as ‘being interrelated and interconnected.’”²⁵⁷ The media sculpture *NansiRoachy* embodies a hypermediated aesthetic by refashioning individual and collective stories so that a community understands themselves in relation to one another and the larger body politic. Moreover, this Jamaican diasporic archives brings together digitized analogue mediums to place them in conversation with images on the internet, from which the community might begin to relate to different space-times of their collective cultural/racial/national identity.

2) Archival research

Archival research generally refers to the searching of materials in official archives. The method requires working with archivists to find materials and, concerning the materials themselves, analytical, interpretive, and synthesizing looking and reading practices. My interest in these archives is to bring some textual and audiovisual records in relation to the participants’ stories, and to get a sense of the extent of representation in the archives. The archives and collections I engaged with are the Montgomery Collection at the Art Gallery of Ontario, which has a collection of over 2,000 colonial-era photographs

from the Caribbean; the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections; Library and Archives Canada; Archives Ontario; and the Toronto Archives. My archival research involved noting the inclusions of Jamaicans in the archives and, more notably, their absences. This method included online searches of primarily visual material such as photographs and the occasional film; in-person visits required navigating finding aids and working with archivists to access records on the Jamaican communities. The selected materials will be digitized and made accessible to the community through exhibitions and presentations.

Another aspect of archival research this dissertation articulates is the experiential learning I gained from firsthand lessons in archival appraisal, accession, preservation, digitization, and access/restrictions as I worked with archivists from the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, Archives Ontario, and Library and Archives Canada.

3) Caribbean participatory methods: semiformal interviews and focus groups

Augmenting the archival research are the Caribbean participatory methods used to access tangible and intangible records in the community. By inviting participants to co-create the archive with me, I activate a decolonial process by introducing a multivocal dissertation that is the creation of a participatory archive. Importantly, I recognize that in order to be truly decolonial, I would not be the sole scholar receiving formal recognition for this research. I echo one of the participants' skepticism about the process: "I should be getting a doctorate for all of my knowledge."²⁵⁸ I have tried to mitigate these concerns by gathering three related Caribbean approaches together under this category to frame the semiformal interviews and focus group sessions I conducted, and by preserving their own voices in the process through the recordings. Donette Francis refers to "convening Jamaica" as a method of inquiry that involves researching together, sharing stories, and critical listening and arguing to foster lively engagement amongst diverse people.²⁵⁹ The method generates knowledge by "living with disagreements, seeing interconnected inquiries, and (re)creating embodied archives of critical re-memories."²⁶⁰ Convening Jamaica has an earlier form articulated in Walter Rodney's method of "groundings." His approach to participatory knowledge generation refers to a researcher sitting with the masses and

acknowledging the communities' knowledge-generation methods verbally and through making. These methods further harness knowledge production and dissemination as a collective process.²⁶¹ While Rodney develops "groundings" as a method in a highly gendered, patriarchal context with Rastafarian men, Black and Caribbean feminism informs my adaptation of his method to integrate intersectionalities such as gender, class, and disability. Framing participatory knowledge production as groundings further recognizes the marginalized status of Black peoples in Canada. A final related Caribbean method is "liming and ole talk." The term is primarily used in Trinidad and Tobago and Guyana but understood and practiced throughout the Caribbean to describe social gatherings, big and small, in which people hang out, celebrate, mourn, and generally be together over food and drink while "doing nothing."²⁶² Liming and ole talk highlight the elements of care that feminist methods encourage. Caribbean methods then acknowledge community members as substantiated knowledge keepers of the community's archive while working against the researcher/subject hierarchy of conventional ethnographic interview approaches.

4) Process cinema

The final method I engage in this research-creation dissertation is process cinema. The method frames how I work with film and media and is often associated with a collaborative process that integrates well with Caribbean participatory methodologies. Coined by Scott MacKenzie and Janine Marchessault, process cinema refers to "a creative tradition in alternative filmmaking that is unscripted, improvisational, participatory, and based on the manipulation of the very materiality of film."²⁶³ Here, process cinema takes its cues from a long-standing discourse in visual art, not the least of which is the advent of the post-World War II "process art."²⁶⁴ Process involves a phenomenological approach and refers to "the study of experience, or consciousness, to understand sensations, perceptions, imagination, affect, and other forms of experience."²⁶⁵ Drawing from Alfred North Whitehead's writings on process art, MacKenzie and Marchessault evoke Whitehead's concept of "aesthetic apprehension" to highlight the appreciation of the form of the phenomena and the "aesthetic character of experience."²⁶⁶ The process of *making film by hand* involves a sensorial and embodied knowing: the feel of the material, the attunement to the chemical

processes, and the sense of awe in the colour and image. Maurice Merleau-Ponty's writings on cinema reference the interconnectedness of the artist and their materials, technology, tools, and processes rather than cinema's accurate representation of "the real."²⁶⁷

The practice of process cinema spawned a wide variety of forms, from analogue film projector performances to sculptural reinterpretations of what cinema can do to foster a phenomenological experience on the part of a spectator. For example, Solomon Nagler's description of some cinema architectures highlights film's haptic nature and the audience's role in bringing the work to its aesthetic culmination,²⁶⁸ and Tess Takahashi notes the phenomenological response of the audience to the materiality of the film on the screen.²⁶⁹

My understanding of phenomenology draws from what Dolleen Tisawii'ashii Manning calls "mnidoo-worlding," a concept that engages with but questions Merleau-Ponty's emphasis on human subjectivity, and instead inscribes other dimensions and beings into the world of phenomenological experience by drawing on the Anishinaabek philosophy of "all my relations." In an Anishinaabek worldview, the "interconnected Indigenous modes of being" of "all my relations" prescribe nonhierarchical relations between and with everything else in the world. Viewed from this perspective, collaborating²⁷⁰ with the more-than-human becomes conceivable. Jamaican philosopher Sylvia Wynter similarly rejects the hierarchical modernist world that placed Black peoples outside the conception of the human. Instead, Wynter proposes aligning with the ecologies of the human and more-than-human so that everything becomes subject and not object. The artist, the participants, the tools, the technology (analogue and digital), the plants and medicines, the materials and their composition, the ancestors, the spirit helpers, the furniture, and the architecture all interact with each other in a nonhierarchical fashion.

To contextualize my approach further, I bring in my work with Adrian Kahgee, my co-mischief maker and world builder in Odeimin Runners, an artist collective weaving together Indigenous and Black relations through media and material practices; and my work with Phil Hoffman, a White Canadian experimental filmmaker known for running the longest-standing retreat on plant processing, called the

Film Farm. A collective ethos of reciprocity has developed around handmade film in film labs and cooperatives historically, one in which greater numbers of women participated than in experimental or avant-garde film scenes, a pattern reflected at the Film Farm.²⁷¹ We carried this same ethos into a workshop Kahgee, Hoffman, and I facilitated together in Saugeen First Nation called Saugeen Takes on Film. I am indebted to the pedagogy and methods developed by Hoffman, and include his description of process cinema in “A Film Farm: A Manifesto”:

Your films will surface throughout the relationship between your camera and what passes in front. . . . Without the blanket of preconception, the processes of collect, reflect, revise mirror the underpinnings of your formation. . . . These images you make will be charged with your inner architecture. . . . Errors of time and application can render your film opaque or clear, but you still have a latent image burned into your mind, which can be brought forward on another filming trip. Slighter inconsistencies can upset our expectations and pose a question you would never ask—if all went perfectly.²⁷²

In my artistic practice with Odeimin Runners, we use plants as medicines and situate our bodies on the land as a Black and Indigenous placemaking practice. We work intuitively with community members, plants, and hand-cranked Bolex cameras to derive images on 16mm black-and-white high-contrast film. One experimental process we use is making phytograms, which involves soaking parts of plants in a soda and vitamin C developer and then placing the plants on celluloid film. Exposure to sunlight causes a chemical reaction with the silver nitrate coating on the film, whereby the plant leaves a colour image of itself on the film. The colour comes from the pigments in the plant and the chemical reaction with the film and developer.²⁷³ In this research, phytograms and hand processing with flowers serve as metaphorical and material representations of belonging and migration to situate participants’ stories on the land and in the diaspora. In making this counter-archive, the participants’ stories indicate the plants used in process cinema, whereby the images on film become a record of the medicines that still have meaning and access to Jamaicans in the diaspora.

Contemporary debates and practices of process cinema increasingly address the expanding use of digital materials and processes. In his capacious definition, Clint Enns describes process cinema as something that “involves improvisation, experimentation, and direct physical interaction with the filmic

apparatus.”²⁷⁴ For Enns, the filmic apparatus includes digital “materials” and tools (computers). In a recent Q&A at a retrospective of some of his works, Phil Hoffman reflected on the transformation in his own practice, underscoring the constant flux in the process noted by Whitehead. He described the adoption of digital editing into his practice by noting how the digital still must work with the material that is there.²⁷⁵ Put differently, digital “material” in process cinema cannot exist without the physical materials of film and the natural world, all of which are in relation and interconnected.²⁷⁶

In remediating the materials for the archive, process cinema murmurs with remediation to take on a different quality. While I use the term “remediate” in the mediatized sense of Bolter and Grusin, I also take an errant route to extract “remedy” as the root of remediation. Remedy denotes healing. In praxis, Caribbean feminist matrifocal care networks circulate knowledge regarding plant medicines and healing remedies of non-Christian, indigenous religious practices from Africa and the Caribbean. Process cinema methods compile this data as audio recordings connected to the material process of working with the plants mentioned in the audio used to process the film. Within the logics of hypermediation and remediation-as-remedy, the phenomenological, other-dimensional-spiritual facets of all my relations in process cinema nudge my scholarship towards the possibility of healing and a praxis of livity. What might the “aesthetic apprehension of experience” be like when viewing light projected through the traces these plants leave on the film after interacting with antidotal silver emulsion? Might there be a gesture towards healing? As Takahashi affirms, the final aesthetic outcome might reflect such healing, but it will not be easily read. Arguably, equally crucial to the work is the “extratextual” information—the program notes, Q&As, promotional texts,²⁷⁷ and, in this case, the dissertation, publications, and exhibitions that result from the research-creation project function to contextualize the phenomenological experiences of the work.

In sum, a research-creation methodology and the methods or strategies used to implement it help me investigate my research questions: How do Jamaicans embody the records of the community in creating, expressing, and disseminating community knowledge; and how could an archives (repository)

store that information and make it accessible to wider publics within the community and beyond—for instance, in the dancehall, on the street, in churches, homes, and cultural centres? In what follows, I provide the research design to convey how the process unfolds.

In the preamble to this dissertation, I offered my positionality statement. Here, I list some of the strategies with which I have negotiated self-reflexivity and intersectionality in practice:

- 1) First and foremost, I approached each person with deep respect, following implicit protocols set by elders who have maintained these traditions. These protocols are themselves living records and are made accessible through their oral performances.
- 2) I introduced myself and my genealogy, both ethnically and geographically, to every person and every focus group involved in the project so they would know who I am and where I come from. I explicitly stated that Black Jamaican culture would be centred in this project because African-descendant peoples and histories are the foundation of the culture.
- 3) I made jokes, which are also part of our oral traditions. For example, when a senior participant asked if I would earn a doctoral degree from this research, I replied in the affirmative, saying I was born a doctor since my name is D. R. Ebanks (Debbie Renee Ebanks). After the laughter, I circled back with seriousness to say that yes, I would benefit, and then explained how they, as participants, would benefit as well.
- 4) Every participant or group received an honorarium. Interviewees received copies of their interviews and any records that were digitized. The Heritage Singers received an archival-quality hard drive of their digitized records.
- 5) I tried desperately to speak the Jamiekan Langwij and admitted my failure to speak it properly. I also expressed empathy for those who, like me, lost fluency in the language but tried anyway, despite ridicule.
- 6) Ridicule and chastisement were not taken personally but with a smile. I understood when I was being corrected, often around language.

- 7) Amongst the participants were varying ages, abilities, skin tones, and class, and in terms of the latter, I understood how precarious any attainment of a higher class is.
- 8) I created a space where those interviewed could tell their personal stories, whether alone in a quiet space or around food and phytograms. They were put at ease by my reassurance that there was no way to do this wrong—be it their making of phytograms or their retelling of a particular story. This decolonized space was, therefore, very Caribbean.
- 9) This was my adaptation of the Caribbean liming and ole²⁷⁸ talk methodology.

These strategies amounted to approaches to community care, including care for their records—material and immaterial—to enact a more liveable future now.

Timeline and Locations

In recruiting participants for the research, I intended to get as broad a range of demographics as possible. I worked through three community groups led by Black women to solicit participants: the Heritage Singers Canada folk theatre group (Grace Carter-Henry Lyons), the Jamaican Canadian Association Seniors Group (Pam Reynolds), and the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association (DCCBA) (Alethia Stephenson). I designed a poster graphic (see appendix A) for these leaders to share, and they, in turn, reached out personally to individuals. I held Zoom information sessions for the DCCBA and the Heritage Singers and an in-person session at the JCA Seniors Group. There were six people in each group that gave interviews, as well as four individual interviews. The larger Seniors group participated in the filming only. Each participant completed an informed consent form or indicated on audio or video that they consented. I also recruited several people through personal contacts.

The participants ranged in age from late 20s to middle-aged to senior (the majority group), the oldest being a nonagenarian. Represented in the research are persons who present as women and men, about equally, and people with disabilities, both born and acquired. It is worth noting that I did not ask

people to self-identify gender or sexual orientation because of the older demographic and cultural sensitivity. I feel it is essential to have LGBTQ people represented in the archive, but this requires different subcommunities and access, which I do not have in Toronto and area. This subgroup is, therefore, an area of future research. Furthermore, it is not definitively possible to describe what class or where folks were from because many had migrated out of the Toronto area—from Jane and Finch and Scarborough mostly—and all had different backgrounds, many at different times in their lives, which reflects my own lived experience. Additionally, I conducted individual semiformal interviews.

An important consideration in working with the community was the time taken individually and collectively for participants to get to know me and I them. I navigated intuitive, unarticulated Caribbean protocols based on my own implicit and explicit knowledge and reading of the body, which points to the phenomenological approach of the research. While workshops and interviews were scheduled for two to four hours, every single person went beyond the time because participants desired to continue the conversations. While all participants were offered food and refreshments and an honorarium, the Seniors' group already had food provided. I engaged in liming and ole talk while eating with them. They received a group honorarium as per request. The Harriet Tubman Institute and the Academic Excellence Fund at York University provided all funds for honoraria.

The workshops took place in three locations—in Shelburne, Ontario, at Streams Hub, a local arts education centre founded by a Black Caribbean couple; in the Jane and Finch neighbourhood in Toronto, at the Jamaican Canadian Association's community centre; and at York University in the Kaneff Building at the Centre for Research in Latin America and the Caribbean. In all locations, I engaged in Caribbean participatory methodologies and remediation.

August 2023–April 2024: Remediation (filming and recording), archival research, Caribbean participatory methods during workshops and interviews

I prepared a schedule, which is provided in appendix B. However, I needed to adapt to participants and the dynamics of each group regularly, particularly with the seniors who determined the activities that would be permitted on any given day. Food and drink in Caribbean participatory methods eased the conversation, which was prompted by a set of questions, provided in appendix C. Generally, however, the storytelling unfolded organically. The individual interviews were more straightforward.

All of these conversations were recorded to remediate the embodied archive. Additionally, I digitized photographs, took cellphone portraits, and printed them on the spot, and they were well received.²⁷⁹ During the second and third meetings, but never on the first, I used process cinema methods to film and engaged a cinematographer, Sonya Mwambu, to help with filming and, unexpectedly, with cellphone portraits. I also filmed the exteriors of Jamaican-owned shops in the rural towns of Alliston and Shelburne, a block party, and civic spaces where participants lived and engaged in rural civic life.

April–May 2024: Archival research

Based on the stories/data of participants, I conducted archival research on federal immigration policies and reggae music recordings, as well as researched in the Jamaican Canadian Association fonds at Library and Archives Canada in May 2024. I was scheduled to research the Montgomery Collection at the AGO in April, but the gallery was closed due to a strike. I gained access at the end of May after the end of the strike. An extended strike delayed research at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections at York University. After working with the then–head archivist, Michael Moore, and subsequently with the interim head archivist, Anna St. Onge, I completed the process of donating the Heritage Singers Canada records to the archives, and the Heritage Singers Canada fonds was accessioned in January 2025.

May–October 2024: Process cinema and making the media sculpture

After collating the materials and media archives, both created and preserved, I returned to two

of the three working groups for a third series of workshops where we tinted the film with plant dyes. I also made dyes from plants mentioned in the participants' stories. Using these plant materials, I edited film footage with digitized archival materials to "remediate" the archives as one form of research-creation, or artistic knowledge production as digital projections. Concurrently, I created a media sculpture as a repository for these archives that could also facilitate public access. In order to share the knowledge produced in this research, exhibitions of the media sculpture and/or video projections have been scheduled, including for the JCA Caribbean Seniors Group in March 2025 and at PAMA (Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives) in late 2025/early 2026.

Without any comprehensive collection of records from the Jamaican Canadian community, it seems impossible to adequately gauge the impact of the community on broader regional or national narratives. However, this may not be the goal of building an archives. Perhaps instead, this counter-archival project offers a starting point from which to grasp greater self-understanding about one's place in this country—the obstacles faced, the injustices, but also the unrecognized successes—and create a counternarrative to the racist, criminalized depictions of Jamaicans in the media. A Jamaican diasporic community archive provides evidence for these counternarratives collected from the stories and other intangible, performative embodied archives and textual and mediated records of community members, made available to a broader public. The community archive also signals to the community the importance of their stories, experiences, and the embodied ways they preserve their history. Also important are the community's physical, emotional, psychological, financial, and temporal hesitations in visiting an institutional archives. Working against colonial ideas of building big institutions, the research-creation approach provides flexibility that considers the community's needs rather than shaping the community's needs to fit the institution. Thinking deeply through access, the only conclusion can be that the Jamaican diaspora archives must be mobile, like the community's migratory body, and meet the people where they are.

CHAPTER 4

Creating *NansiRoachy*: Community Counter-Archives

This chapter describes the research-creation process as a series of movements inwards and outwards, highlighting the generative phenomenological relations of creating with people, plants, and liquids, intersecting with theoretical frameworks that give insight into the tensions between communities, archives, and archival institutions. The research design afforded an approach to archiving as co-creation and carework, impacting my decisions regarding space, media, and media technologies for the planned multimedia performative sculpture. The research unfolded in several stages, beginning with community engagement and archival research to gather old and newly recorded media. Process cinema methods were used to make phytograms and dyed film, which were then digitally edited from newly recorded 16mm film and digital video. A fulsome discussion of community engagement ensued to situate the importance of oral traditions and protocols as corporeally mediated archives alongside archival audiovisual materials and the new media creation this research generates. The final stage is the creation of a media sculpture that functions as a repository (archives) for the digital and digitized records (archives) of Jamaicans in Canada and as an interactive object around which to gather and have conversations. To centre the performative, storytelling nature of Jamaican archives and the spaces through which the diaspora navigates the space of Canada, the sculpture, called *NansiRoachy*, takes the form of a large-scale mobile Anansi spider figure with Aunty Roachy's cockroach wings, and is assembled from materials suggestive of the community.

Community and Archival Care

The fieldwork consisted of sitting with my sisters and brothers—groundings—to provide a space for them to talk about their lives, insights, and community stories, and for me, in turn, to share bits and pieces of my own. The oral histories sessions, often with food, music, and even devotions and songs, transpired in

homes, on Zoom, at York University, at the JCA Caribbean Seniors Group in Jane and Finch, and finally at Streams Hub, a community arts space in Shelburne, Ontario. Considering where participants lived in the past and now, the research covers the entire GTA, Dufferin and Simcoe Counties, and even Hamilton. Dedicated meetings were held with two individuals—Grace Carter-Henry Lyons and Gertrude King—to digitize their personal archival collections and discuss options for preservation at home and in official archives. Researching personal and family archives requires observing unsaid protocols, community time, and space for conversations. This project provided space for participants to express their experiences of being Black and being Jamaican in Canada and even in small-town Ontario. I have included the names of the co-creators who waived anonymity so that their contributions would be associated with their identities. I have included the names of public-facing community leaders who served as interlocutors and co-creators in the project.

Community authorization was an interactive, intuitive, and almost sensorial vetting process. Often, several meetings were required. Community members asked questions, sized me up, and judged whether their “spirit tek” me.²⁸⁰ Some members knew me beforehand and based their participation on prior encounters with me. Others vetted me via a community leader. Ultimately, I relied on the snowball method of recruiting by developing a trusted relationship with these leaders, all of whom are Black women. One of these women was Grace Carter-Henry Lyons, founder and artistic director of the Heritage Singers Canada (HSC). As a long-time family friend, Lyons is “Auntie” to me. When I adopted the role of researcher, a noticeable change in the relationship dynamic ensued to one that was more horizontal, but complex. Ms. Lyons clarified on several occasions that the locus of knowledge resided with her and critiqued the colonial education system by insisting that her work should be acknowledged with a doctorate and that I would be the one learning from the process. I wholeheartedly concurred.

During the two workshops, on Zoom and in person at the Kaneff Building at York, Lyons asked the HSC members to structure their answers to the interview questions centred on a folk song and a personal experience (appendix C). Unique to this focus group comprised of folk performers, the

framework of embodied archives elicited impromptu dance and song performances, which I recorded on a mobile device in response to the moment's spontaneity.

Another Black woman community leader was Alethia Stephenson, founder and executive director of the Dufferin County Canadian Black Association (DCCBA). Community buy-in for Dufferin County involved two phone conversations and an ongoing WhatsApp messaging thread over the course of two years, as well as attending two DCCBA Black History events. Once the research received ethics approval (appendix D), Stephenson hosted an information session on Zoom for residents in Shelburne and Alliston to ask questions. I recruited five research participants from this information session, three of whom attended the workshops and two who gave interviews. Several could not participate due to the timing but still want to be included in the project as it continues beyond the conclusion of the dissertation. Stephenson, who is Jamaican, has a YouTube Channel in which she interviews Black community members in Dufferin County, many of whom are Jamaican. The installation will link to this online archive of interviews. In sum, the Shelburne workshops included a guided discussion based on the interview questions with plenty of space for digressions. A beautiful dynamic developed whereby participants intuitively co-facilitated the discussion. In the second workshop, we filmed using a 16mm Bolex camera; in the final workshop, we made phytograms.

The third Black woman community leader was Pam Reynolds, Chair of the Caribbean Canadian Seniors Club Chair. Ken Bowen, a Heritage Singers focus group member, connected me with Pam Reynolds, the seniors coordinator at the Jamaican Canadian Association (JCA). Reynolds invited me to give a short talk on the research to describe how the Caribbean Seniors Group could participate. The group, comprised primarily of Jamaicans, also embraced persons from other Caribbean nations since similar programs do not exist to represent the smaller islands. This was a real groundings session in which one of the seniors expressed their displeasure about a previous experience where they did not see the research results, and others similarly voiced their concerns. Another chided me for not knowing the Langwaj well enough, and still another expressed how "Patois/Patwa was a love language." I promised to

learn to speak better and reassured the group that the research design included community presentations. The vibrant exchange was in good humour and itself representative of the importance of cultural understanding in communications. The quiet acceptance of me as a researcher by the craft instructor, Sharon Wynter-Bowen, finally opened a door to engaging the seniors. Ultimately, all but one of the seniors were willing to participate in being filmed as a group; five recorded oral histories, and five women, including one Grenadian, participated in a phytogram workshop.

These Black women leaders reflect the matrifocal ways in which community coalesces across different geographies and contexts. The vetting process fostered an atmosphere of trust that contributed to open discussions. Some participants brought examples from their personal archival collections to the interview or focus group. The interview questions prompted participants to think about what their records/histories/memories documented and to regard their records in high esteem instead of thinking they were of value to no one. Sharing my own responses to the questions as an insider-outsider also built trust. Out of the interviews and workshops, three participants were interested in the possibility of donating to an official archives rather than risking the discarding of their materials. This project facilitates that process by creating a foundation for a relationship with the CTASC and Archives Ontario should there be future donations in addition to the Heritage Singers Canada fonds and other materials that surfaced during the course of this research.

Tracing Embodied Archives Collectively

In my experience working with communities, witnessing constitutes an aspect of groundings while activating quotidian embodied records. Recall Collier and Tonia Sutherland's assertion, relying on Camp't's practice of listening to images: Black archival practice entails witnessing documentary evidence as testimony. A living archive is composed of intangible records—the stories and methods of storytelling involving hand gestures, glances, code-switching to the Langwijn, and other modes of conveying meaning English words do not. A corporeal recording—the body as media—stores a more fulsome version of

documentary evidence. Witnessing these records as the researcher similarly produces an affective charge in my body, which the body documents and stores, mirroring or compounding the affect of the latent embodied knowing of the Door of No Return, referring to the portals of slave castles in Ghana or Gorée Island, “that place where our ancestors departed one world for another; the Old World for the New. The place where all names were forgotten and all beginnings recast. In some desolate sense it was the creation place of Blacks in the New World Diaspora.”²⁸¹ I intuitively understand Brand’s meaning when she writes, “All human effort seems to emanate from this door. How do I know this? Only by self-observation, only by looking. Only by feeling. Only by being a part, sitting in the room with history.”²⁸² Witnessing within a groundings methodology, therefore, affects how I sit with elders, the attention I bring to their stories, and the intense listening, a method resulting in my own transformation as I integrate these stories with my own experiences and catalogue of remembered stories, without conflating my embodied archives with theirs. Witnessing charges the space of groundings with the weight of the importance of Black Atlantic methods of recordkeeping via oral traditions such as storytelling, the Jamiekan Langwiji and its accompanying gestures, and communal gatherings and dancing.

During group and individual sessions, I noticed how participants’ perspectives regarding their own archives shifted. Rather than dismissing their life stories and family keepsakes, they began to realize how vital their recordkeeping was to personal, community, and even national archives. The very existence of this study further gave credence to their knowledge-keeping. For example, Gertrude King’s photograph collection documents the beginning of the JCA, her mother, who came to Canada as a domestic worker, and family celebrations. Her photographs of political advocacy, community building, carework, and even family separation portray gestures, movements, and other embodied epistemologies that document life in Canada as registered in her family stories and practices, which in turn map across many of the participants’ accounts. Affectively witnessing the narration of photographs and listening to these images, following Tina Campt’s method,²⁸³ coproduced a safe dialogic space within which to process the archived traumas present in both of our bodies.²⁸⁴ Witnessing helps to unpack the cognate histories shared across

the community and emphasizes the importance of framing these performative practices of recordkeeping as archives, and the importance of testimony beyond the immediate utterance. The conversation, therefore, included a discussion about the future of King's collection, since there was little family interest in retaining it, and the pros and cons of donating to an institutional archives.

Other factors helped shift or confirm community perspectives about the significance of their stories, such as recording "on tape" or knowing the value that institutional archives placed on their records to fill the massive gaps in their collections, albeit belatedly. Filming on 16mm film added even more gravitas to the moment. I brought my camera to each workshop and was prepared to film. However, the affective charge of the moment of recording "on film" made me step back and reflect that yet another form of media archiving was not necessary for documenting stories. Since gestures and dance are a particular focus of this dissertation, I began to think about how the audio might help to preserve the gesture by activating the memory of that gesture in the viewer as an implicit form of knowledge transmission. However, the further removed a generation is from a direct connection to the homeland, the greater the likelihood that transmission fails to complete its transformation in the descendent.²⁸⁵

I filmed only during the second or subsequent workshops to place relationship-building before any imaging. Understanding the weight participants placed on the filming and their representation on screen, I hired cinematographer Sonya Mwambu to handle the 16mm Bolex camera while facilitating the conversation. This decision helped to avoid splitting my attention between the camera operation and creating a space where folks would feel comfortable sharing. I chose to work with Mwambu because process cinema anchors their work and because they bring theoretical and lived understandings of Blackness, what it means to be in front of and behind the camera, as well as the technical knowledge of lighting required to film dark skin tones.

In the seniors group, Mwambu and I photographed and printed cellphone portraits on a mobile photo printer. The intention was to print digital photos already on the seniors' phones, but participants soon understood that we could take pictures in the moment and print them on the spot. The spontaneous

“polaroidization” of the workshop expedited several fortunate outcomes. First, participants clearly had a say in how an activity would proceed and how they would be represented in an image. Second, the digital photos produced an impromptu archive of Caribbean seniors at the JCA with poses that counter the colonial, White gaze of the photographers whose images comprise the Montgomery Collection of Caribbean Photographs at the Art Gallery of Ontario.²⁸⁶ The photos and videos depict Jamaicans in Canada posing, dancing, and communing in a setting in which they feel at ease. These movement and affective archives come alive in the following film that will be projected on a screen during future exhibitions:

<https://vimeo.com/1015021689/a7df0f05f5>

The final unexpected outcome was that the cellphone portraits created by Mwambu and me in conjunction with the seniors proved instrumental in gaining their trust, thereby encouraging more members to participate either through interviews, by being filmed, or by engaging with the photogram workshop.

Participants’ reflections further extended the notion of archives beyond what I initially hypothesized. The expressive culture of the Jamaican people discussed in the first chapter, referencing Moore and Johnson, Warner-Lewis, and others, which I am putting in the same category as archives, corresponds to the oral traditions or categories participants themselves value as culturally significant. In answer to my prompt—What are archives in the Jamaican culture?—participants identified spiritual practice and beliefs as archives. Grace Lyons referred to folk songs as “the news,” Melody Brown mentioned recipes and pet names, and Alton Stephenson mentioned prayers and proverbs; several offered celebrations and the language itself as ways of documenting history. Judith Andrade pointed to the practice of writing the family genealogy in the Bible as a syncretic outcome of the African oral tradition. All participants who engaged with the question “What are archives?” mentioned stories.

Their insights helped me to think about the dynamic nature of embodied archiving and the possibility of change according to location and time. For instance, Vincent Conville, one of the community members I interviewed, mentioned picnics in public parks as a tradition that started in

Toronto, as well as parties and community Christmas parties at the Jamaican Canadian Association's building. The remediation of the Heritage Singers' VHS tapes highlights their performances for Jamaican Independence Day, which functioned as occasions to produce, reproduce, and transmit historical and cultural knowledge through "the spoken word, song and body motions."²⁸⁷ These events further afford opportunities where code-switching between English (in its various dialects) and the Langwiy, as well as the accents and inflections of "the Jamiekian Langwiy,"²⁸⁸ indicates the geographic locative specificity of the diasporic community. Conville and Nemiah Bailey, both presidents of the JCA at different times, emphasized how other cultural groups of new immigrants formed similar institutions, using the JCA's constitution and model to support their communities. The JCA is a cultural and social justice institution in which members of the community transmit stories and talk about their everyday experiences being or becoming Black in Canada, the out-of-body feeling of double consciousness first theorized by W. E. B. Du Bois and articulated differently by Frantz Fanon in the 1950s as a Black Caribbean man entering a White dominant society in France.²⁸⁹ In Canada specifically, Michele A. Johnson and Funké Aladejebi attest to the active disconnect between the objectification of Black people and their own self-image by noting that "by their very *being*, Black people in Canada—whose presence across the centuries has often been framed by racialization racism, varying levels of hostility, prejudice, and discrimination—have been involved in the project of unsettling that image."²⁹⁰ Participants' own testimonies, and the audio archives I reactivated, described the moments they became defined by White Canadians by what Fanon calls the "racial epidermal schema."²⁹¹ It is from this social position in Canadian society that Jamaicans advocated (and still do) against racist police practices and government policies. I count the body motions and spoken words of advocacy as part of the living archive transmitted from slave rebellions to the struggles to protect, defend, and nurture Afro-Creole cultural freedom.²⁹²

The above discussion sheds light on the importance of the vetting process. The snowball recruitment technique was facilitated by having one person interview me and vet my intentions before introducing me to a larger group. While multiple interactions with community members in workshops and

interviews helped build trust, granting me access to personal records required another level of scrutiny. I offer some details here to reflect some of the priorities from the Jane and Finch Research Group's recommendations and training,²⁹³ which I integrated with my own insights working in Indigenous and migrant communities. The following describes how community research can happen in practice.

Community Records, Institutional Archives

Heritage Singers Canada Fonds

Grace Lyons is a long-time family friend who vetted me anew for the role of researcher. During the 1980s, the VHS format's camera size, lower costs, and at-home television viewing expanded community access and entrepreneurship in videography for weddings and community events.²⁹⁴ The Heritage Singers Canada (HSC) fonds, which now resides at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC), includes documentation of HSC performances, rehearsals, and interviews on VHS tape, audiocassettes, CDs, and photographs. VHS and audio cassettes further afforded at-home recordings of broadcast television and radio shows on which the HSC were featured, enabling the retention of appearances on Citytv's *Breakfast Television* and copies of a CBC documentary and radio interview, which they would otherwise not have the copyright for or the chance to rewatch. These highly accessible analogue media created by Black professional videographers functioned as marketing tools to sell at performances in the community and internationally, providing a revenue stream as the group did not generally receive grants. The VHS tapes, CDs, and cassettes were also a form of documentation to support potential grants.²⁹⁵

Over the course of the year and with the aid of her son, Lyons expressed gratitude for my facilitating the preservation of the HSC archives, even as she questioned whether I was someone to whom she could impart her trust. Collecting records required going several times to Lyons's home, eating lunch with her, bringing gifts and food, telling stories of the past, listening to concerns about the legacy and future of the group, and sharing family stories. Through her son she asked me to return some materials for

more vetting before I donated them to the CTASC, signalling the need for the researcher/archivist to ensure that the owner/manager of the community or family archive has an ally in safeguarding their interests.

There are several occasions in which questions of access to the records after donation indicate an existentially affective relationship to the records—what does it mean to the community member to relinquish control over documentation of a life’s work in community? A promised contract and memo of understanding with the CTASC and the Informed Consent Form (see appendix E) proved inadequate to address these concerns. I responded to each query with reassurance and patience, mentioning throughout the process that if Lyons was not ready, we would not proceed with the donation and could digitize the materials while she kept the records. However, she was aware that, as she is now in her senior years, the records would likely be discarded after she passed. Having performed at McMaster University in commemoration of Hon. Louise “Miss Lou” Bennett-Coverley during the accession of her records, Lyons was familiar with a university archives. In the end, I assembled nineteen VHS tapes, over twenty audiocassettes, and over two hundred photographs, as well as programs, administrative records, and newspaper clippings. The CTASC accessioned the collection in December 2023, for which I wrote a description in collaboration with Lyons (see appendix F).

During negotiations with the CTASC I expected to develop a memorandum of understanding based on conversations with the head archivist.²⁹⁶ I was informed that personnel were overstretched, and the more work I could do upfront, the quicker the records could be made accessible to the public. Moreover, the interim head archivist, Anna St. Onge, assured me the concerns the donor had could be addressed without the formal MOU, which required extensive involvement by the university’s legal team.²⁹⁷ Verbal reassurances about timely public accessibility were made. However, in the end, I did not see a memorandum of understanding or the donation agreement. In the middle of my research, there was limited access to the archives because of a strike at the university. After the strike, I met with the archivist to arrange the materials into folders and boxes, and we spoke about the donation agreement and access.

However, I could not confirm the letter's contents since the donation agreement was sent directly to Grace Lyons, the donor. Moreover, I had hoped to digitize the cassettes, for which I was promised access to equipment. Subsequent attempts to contact the archivist before his impending retirement failed, complicated by my lack of time. Finally, I was not aware that I would lose control of the negotiation process once the decision was made to create the Heritage Singers Canada fonds separate from the Jamaican Diasporic Counter-Archives project, which would need to be assigned to my name. In November 2024, I restarted negotiations with the interim archivist to clarify outstanding concerns. After several meetings and email exchanges with both the archivist and Lyons, the donation agreement was signed, and as of January 2025, the Heritage Singers Canada fonds was officially established.

Several aspects of this negotiation process still need to be clarified. As an academic but not a professional archivist, I found the process both new and opaque. Doctoral students and community members are amateurs. There is no formal archival structure for community archives at the CTASC, and, in my experience, the system is better designed for individual donors. Indeed, I was assured that access and digitization would continue post-accession, but there was no recourse for me to ensure that that would transpire. I therefore recommend a formalized process that is made available to the potential donor for the accession of community archives at the CTASC and other institutional archives.²⁹⁸ In this policy, a transparent process should be developed and written in accessible language for community donors and communicated in writing, in person, and in a YouTube video so that donors can repeatedly refer back to the terms to consider when donating. Both the CTASC and Archives Ontario work with communities but have no formal policies or procedures. Melissa Nelson, archivist at Archives of Ontario, states that since it is a community-driven process, a generic policy would not be useful, although formal policies were developed with regard to Indigenous archives.²⁹⁹ Regardless, formalization of the donation process remains a desirable objective. A paramount consideration I would like to add to Nelson's insight regarding customizing the process for communities would be the development of a process to work with a

cross-section of community representatives to develop and document community protocols regarding the accession, preservation, description, and public presentation of their archives.

Such a process would formally acknowledge how archival power is practiced through archival arrangement and accession. If decolonizing and working against white supremacy is indeed an objective of the institution, then the onus should not be on the community to decipher the structural barriers to transparency and access. An example of a practical application of such a policy would be a template and list of possible requests to create MOUs and donation agreements outlining the donor's rights in relation to institutional responsibilities. The implications of each request or archival structural parameter should be clearly laid out in lay terms so that the donor or community representative understands the conditions under which they may exert their requests. Another example would be an agreed-upon timeline of public accessibility or searchability of the collection. At the time of this writing, the collection is not yet searchable, as seen below in figure 8, although I do anticipate this will be the case before the end of 2025.

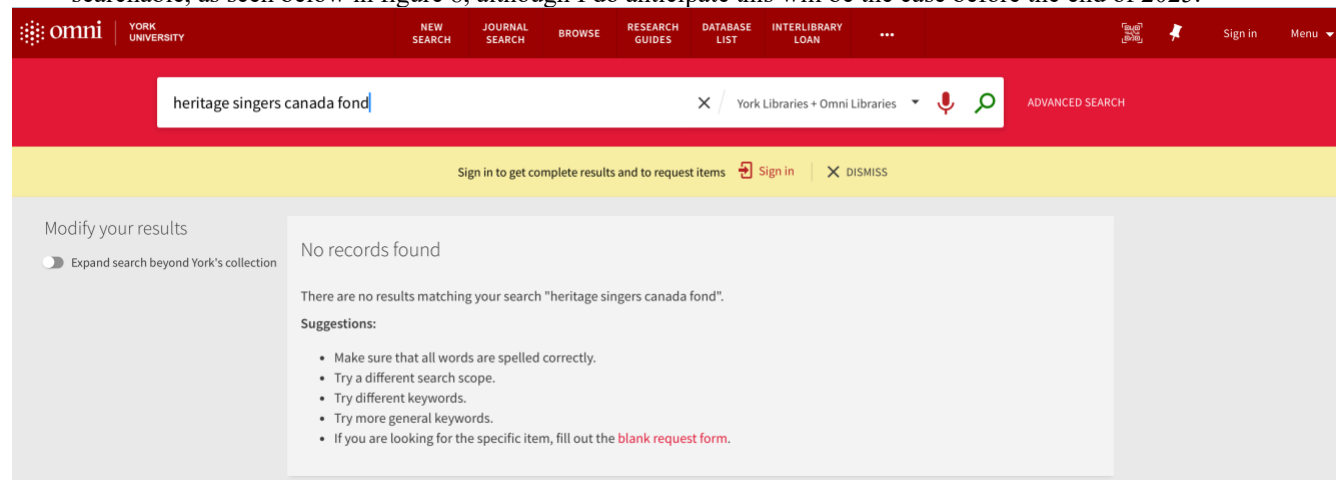


Figure 8 Screenshot of York University Libraries Omni search engine, accessed November 17, 2024.

The importance of the HSC fonds and the digitization of its materials lies in what Diana Taylor calls the repertoire or the performative, embodied archive, with its media catalogue of folk songs, language-movement retentions, and theatrical representations of everyday life. HSC musical performances transpose Olive Lewin's historical work in Jamaica to Toronto. Lewin's work played into the politics of respectability of a country at the dawn of its political independence from Britain³⁰⁰ by imposing classical music construction over the folk origins of the songs; I regard this move as a creolization as well as an interpretation of Afro-Jamaican community life. The HSC fonds shows the influence of a more transgressive Afro-Jamaican consciousness that Louise Bennett-Coverley evangelized in the original theatrical presentations interspersed between more classical-oriented musical interpretations of folk songs, which, during the focus group interviews, participants also sang "raw" to

underscore the difference. The theatre presentations reperformed daily life in Jamaica for the generation that grew up in the 1950s, and depicted scenes of contemporary life between Canada and Jamaica. The continuity of African survivals and the creolization of the embodied archive shows how Jamaican culture continues to transform as it adopts new gestures and languages, corporeally documenting acculturation to Canadian life.

Library and Archives Canada Research: Jamaican Canadian Association Fonds and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation Fonds

I travelled to Ottawa to assess what records the national archives had on Jamaicans. Along with a few reggae recordings and a few issues of *Reggae Quarterly*, a magazine published in Toronto, Canada, on the reggae music scene between 1982 and 1988, I accessed the Jamaican Canadian Association fonds, Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) recordings, and government records on what is known as the “domestic worker scheme.”

Participant Vincent Conville, a former president of the JCA, donated materials to Library and Archives Canada (LAC) as part of his doctoral research on the organization. Through interviews and “liming and ole talk” with Conville, I learned about the organization’s advocacy, the tensions with other Black Canadian organizations and ethnicities within the Jamaican diaspora fold, and the dedicated work of the women and men at the JCA, who all worked full-time jobs and raised families. Within this collection I found interviews Conville himself conducted in the early 2000s with members who are now in the Seniors Group. I also found archives related to Gertrude King’s father, one of the founding members of the JCA. In Conville’s basement are several boxes of personal records and ephemera that his family is not interested in keeping.

While the JCA fonds puts the community’s advocacy and collective care on full display, the language of the records pertaining to the West Indian Domestic Scheme showed the dehumanizing effects of politics and bureaucracy, and evidence of race and class biases. At LAC, I sifted through the

innumerable documents and copies of documents tracking the bureaucratic decision-making process to make middle- and upper-class White women's lives easier. Unsurprisingly, there was little evidence of concern for the social and labour conditions of young Black Caribbean women. I found testimony to those conditions in the film and audio recordings of some of these women in the CBC archives at LAC. These recordings retell the stories of the women who came as domestic workers to Canada in the 1950s and 1960s. I did not expect the women to be so frank, and it was sobering to witness how they theorized the structural racist and misogynistic predicaments they faced.

Several interviewees are children or grandchildren of domestic workers who came during the scheme that began in 1955. The following projection captures some of these experiences in their own voices and features piano music played by Patrick "BJ" Brown, a young, Black, disabled man who has the gift of perfect pitch. He is also the grandson of a former domestic worker.

<https://vimeo.com/1029860908/c84dc2dc9b?share=copy>

Missing and Destroyed Reggae Archives

While the reggae scene in Toronto is now well documented,³⁰¹ a conversation with a second-generation Jamaican Fijian led me to revisit the reggae music archives, which have been featured in recent research projects such as the Afrosonic Innovation Lab and the NFB series *Sounds & Pressure: Reggae in a Foreign Land* (2024), amongst others previously mentioned. The participant's father, a Fijian of South Asian descent, Francis Nand, was a producer in the Toronto area for Jamaican reggae artists on his record label, Spectrum Records. He offered a different perspective as someone in the scene but of a nationality and ethnic background other than Jamaican. In a fit of rage precipitated by deception and thievery on the part of his business partner, a Jamaican Canadian, Nand destroyed his entire archives. When I asked whether he knew of any surviving copies, he recalled packaging, stamping, and mailing vinyl copies of reggae records from his production company to LAC. I engaged the help of an archivist, but neither of us could locate the Spectrum Records collection. I did, however, locate a 45 rpm vinyl record from a used

record dealer in Scarborough. Nand's oral history in this project is a testament to the existence of an important reggae label working internationally and based in Milton, Ontario. The *NansiRoachy* will feature this record and other records I purchased from a dealer on Facebook Marketplace.

The undervaluation of Jamaican Canadian music production by radio stations was exacerbated by the Jamaican community's low acceptance of reggae music produced in Canada because its authenticity was questioned. Instead, Jamaican Canadian reggae artists depended on growing an audience within mainstream Canadian society. The small collection of vinyl records I assembled represents music, songwriting, and performance archives of Canadian reggae. These are oral traditions with a lineage to the earlier mento music forms that Miss Lou and the Heritage Singers activate. The musicians represented in these vinyl records constitute essential developments in the social transformations in Canada, with songs documenting experiences of and beyond Jamaica and unique to Black Ontario geographies. The selection of vinyl I acquired includes three records by Black Jamaican women. I had to ask specifically for records from women and noted how women's music production was treated as an afterthought. A possible indicator of the difficulties these women faced was that the three records from three different producers had separate, male artists singing on the B-side, which was not the case for any of the records recorded by men. None of the female artists could claim an entire 45 rpm record as her own. The history of reggae in the city was previously sparsely documented. However, projects like Mark Campbell's Afrosonic Innovation Lab and the NFB's *Sounds & Pressure* series are bridging fuller histories to the official archives.³⁰² Alanna Stuart's Rewind/Forward project is the only dancehall archive featuring female and queer dancehall artists, pointing to a gap requiring more research.³⁰³

The community research highlights how vulnerable personal archives are to disappearance when next-generation family members show disinterest or lack the capacity to keep family records, or else dispose of or destroy the records because of the trauma they embody. Most participants had no desire to engage with official archives. One member of the Shelburne/Alliston group, Alton Stephenson, expressed reluctance because there was no community engagement after his family loaned materials to a local

archives (repository). Moreover, items from his personal collection were returned damaged. Such experiences serve to convey the message that Black archives do not receive the same care as archives from mainstream Canada, which reinforces white supremacy in the archives through simple neglect. Individuals are left with few options to preserve material records, particularly as temporal/generational, spatial (separation from family and homeland; anti-Black violence and death), ideological (rejection of the “folk” culture in favour of a colonial one), and psychological distance from the Jamaican community threaten the transmission of embodied records to the next generation.

This research also highlights the problematic of the archival ontology of Jamaican/Black/Caribbean archives as immaterial records resistive to the national narrative of the “Great White North” in form, content, and political positioning. Since national and other mainstream archives privilege their material collections from the primarily White, colonial, governmental, and upper-class sectors of the population, this research asks what structural and systemic changes need to be made if these same institutions and the same archivists begin collecting Black archives, having been called out for the gaps in their collections. What responsibilities should the institutions have to the communities, and what role could the community play in caring for these archives in the future? Put more bluntly, it is imperative for mainstream archives and their archivists to fundamentally understand how archives perpetuate white supremacy if they indeed want to address the gaps in their collections. I want to suggest that part of addressing the gap is instituting protocols of care that take into account the phenomenological experience Black, Indigenous, and racialized community members have with regard to the archives.³⁰⁴

The Montgomery Collection of Caribbean Photographs at the Art Gallery of Ontario

Describing her experience navigating unwritten codes and the feeling of implicit racism within a nonprofit organization, Maureen Richards, a JCA Seniors Group participant, sums up a community view regarding institutional racism: “It’s subtle and not so subtle.”³⁰⁵ Richards’s analysis reflects my own experience visiting the Art Gallery of Ontario’s study room to view photographs from the Montgomery

Collection. The collection is a sizeable archive of Caribbean photos, with many images shot in Jamaica during the nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries. Multiple checkpoints in the email prior to the visit reinforced the phenomenology of the interior and exterior of the building as a grandiose, imposing institutional architecture. Absent from the collection are fulsome descriptions of photographs of people and places. When I asked the collections coordinator whether she had considered community description as they began to think about the organization and preservation of the collection, she responded with answers about logistics and compensation issues that would make the process cumbersome, emphasizing the need to first achieve a “basic level” for assigning metadata, such as deciding the use of a descriptor for women or men (currently, the people are listed as “Negroes” or “coolies”). I suggested solutions and priorities that considered community, including the importance of involving Caribbean seniors since they would have the clearest memory of these places as they existed in the past. Seniors would also know how to name the photographs, including suggestions on those “basic levels” of metadata that would be relevant to the community. Continued pushback to my suggestions left a palpable tension in the room. Dr. Shaunasea Brown, a Black woman of Jamaican descent with a dark skin tone, accompanied me on my research visit and commented later how the community was left as an afterthought to the collection rather than being brought into the process from the beginning. The intentional and perhaps unintentional hurdles to community access conveyed an unwelcoming message. I include this experience to illuminate how the process of assembling the archive in this research and its architecture operates as institutional critique of the archival process, content, description, form, and access.

Materials, Digitals, Process Cinema, and Care

Plants, Remedies, and Phytograms

The proceeding section underscores the aspect of care required to address the trauma inherent in Black archival content and the racist legacies of archival institutions. In the methodology chapter, I introduced the concept of remediation as a method of reworking and re-presenting media. I want to extract another

grammatical root from the word “remedy.” In my research and broader community experiences, I argue for a mode of research that acknowledges the archives of trauma in Black and Indigenous bodies. In my media sculpture *NansiRoachy*, I adopt the practice of offering remedies that gesture towards healing. In my experience in the diaspora, and including in this project, it is primarily the women who carry knowledge of plant remedies to fill in the gaps of modern medicine. One example is Pam Reynolds,³⁰⁶ who emailed me a poster of a workshop for Black dementia patients, since she was aware of my father’s health condition. In her email, there is evidence of adaptation to living in Canada, denoted by the mention of rosemary, which is common in Canada but not in Jamaica. Similarly, Melody Brown, a participant in the Alliston/Shelburne focus group, re/learns and revitalizes traditional medicinal knowledge in her own life, knowledge she acquires through research as well as knowledge gained through living and visiting Jamaica. Both instances demonstrate the desire to continue learning about traditional medicinal practices while showing how mutual concern for healing functions as an ethics of care amongst Black women. The following clip highlights the footage of her bottles and garden as she took me on a tour of her garden and herbal research:

<https://vimeo.com/1025618261/9ff409c5fd?share=copy>

Studies on the inequalities of health outcomes in Black populations in Canada note the higher prevalence of heart disease, stroke, dementia, diabetes, hypertension, and even cancer.³⁰⁷ These findings point to structural differences according to race and indicate that Black people do not receive equal treatment under the public health system in Canada. Within this context, Black people must find alternate ways to care for themselves, their families, and their communities. The oral tradition of plant knowledge is carework—it tends to the body inasmuch as it mutually nourishes relations among Caribbean women. Through interviews and introducing a way to work with plants on and through an aesthetic intervention in the medium of film, my research methods archive the development and loss of cultural knowledge of plants with the relationality of learning from the plant and transmitting knowledge to the community.

I wanted to highlight these forays into the relationship with and to plants because they have formed a large part of the knowledge base that Jamaicans have brought to Canada, and because of the marginalization of Caribbean traditional knowledge due to the hegemony of Western medicine and Christian values that reject indigenous epistemologies, even as efforts are being made to revitalize that knowledge in the face of outsiders in the pharmaceutical industry capitalizing on it.³⁰⁸ Factors such as higher formal education, lack of access to botanicals, and acculturation to Western culture primarily through education³⁰⁹ are amplified by a diasporic location in Canada. Such geographical and sociocultural distancing was reflected in the conversations in the Simcoe/Dufferin County focus group. For instance, those who were first and 1.5 generation talked about their knowledge of plant medicines and the conscious effort to maintain or learn traditional medicine. However, Gertrude King, a second-generation Jamaican, recounted how “folkloric” medicine and culture was not encouraged in the household of her childhood in the 1960s, yet, as an adult, she became a certified aromatherapist, which she regarded as a cognate medicinal herbal practice.³¹⁰

Five women participated in the phytogram workshops with the JCA Caribbean Seniors. I gave a cursory how-to instruction, anticipating the stories that would be shared simply because participants were working with plants from Jamaica, or plants which they would know from Jamaica even if they grew here. They were interested in working in pairs or alone. Rather than record the stories, I simply witnessed how the narratives guided their gestures in laying the plants onto the filmstrip or choosing which plants they would use and how they would arrange them. There was such joy watching these women tell their stories, promoted by the colours and textures, memories and knowledge they associated with the plants. Since I needed to scan the phytograms at home, I returned another day to give them photographs of themselves working with the phytograms alongside the scanned images.³¹¹ At first I anticipated that process cinema would help build community, but something different happened instead. Process cinema was a component of a much larger effort to build trust and community amongst the co-creators of the project and to make storytelling the core of the archive, since participants identified stories as the most

critical embodied archive. *NansiRoachy* therefore contains a collection of stories that range from the folk songs and tales the Heritage Singers reactivate through their own relation to each historical song, to accounts of racism in Canada, classism and colourism in Jamaica, and the complex set of diasporic connections that promised help but often ended in betrayal.

In the Simcoe/Dufferin County focus group, participants brought their plants and added them to the ones I already had. I supplied sorrel, which I had saved at Christmastime and held in my freezer for months; ginger and sugarcane slices; and ginkgo biloba—as a joke-not-joke. Ginkgo biloba is used for improving memory. I recall my mother imploring me to take capsules of the plant to enhance my admittedly poor memory, but I always forgot to take it. These jokes are critical interventions into a Western sense of a focus group to create an environment for “liming and ole talk.” Co-creators brought mint, sugar pine, African violets, scotch bonnet and other hot peppers, okra, callaloo and lavender harvested from their gardens or houseplants, and each had a story to tell about the plants. Some of these conversations were recorded. While previous discussions often turned to life in Canada, the conversations at this phytogram workshop brought forth knowledge about Jamaica. Melody Brown brought her pumpkin soup and served it in calabash (a gourd used for dishwater). This prompted a story by Alton Stephenson about how the calabash tree was a “duppy”³¹² tree because people would get buried under it. We also held the workshop at my home, which is in the countryside of Mulmur, and even though we were in Canada, there was much discussion of which fruit trees to plant, what food to cook outdoors and what festivals to hold, and even talk of a jerk-pit business we could set up on the road. This phytogram workshop was the best example of groundings and liming and ole talk because it had a sense of sharing knowledge and placemaking as a community-driven impetus. My role was to set the stage for this sharing and placemaking to unfold. These conversations push back on the term “urban” as a euphemism for Black. Black people are also farmers with deep knowledge of how to grow and process food naturally, practices conducted by the participants, who had gardens and houseplants for eating and healing. Participants treated made phytograms with their plants with such care, evident in their gestures.

<https://vimeo.com/1025617431/c94155879f?share=copy>

The stories and conversations across all three focus groups produced a list of plants used for remedies and foods, some of which they grew in their gardens: cerasee, sorrel, coconut oil, chocolate tea, okra, and ganja. In my own family, white rum was also used as a medicine. A song, “Mango Walk,” prompts the use of the mango; stories of Christmas celebrations offer sorrel as a significant plant. Walking with Melody in her garden and talking about guava, ganja, and other food medicines and the dishes made with vegetables from the garden, or Vincent Conville walking me through cellphone pictures of his garden as he related the loss of a spouse, all reflect on a Jamaican life in Canada. I incorporated some of these remedies into film processing, particularly sorrel and okra.

In process cinema, one method of working with plants is through the making of phytograms, which involves soaking flowers in washing soda and vitamin C and then placing the plant materials on film. The chemical reaction forms silver halide to create an image on the film, what Phil Hoffman refers to as the plant’s “soul.” During the workshops, participants made phytograms with plants I had brought—sorrel flowers, thin strips of ginger and mango, lilies and irises blooming at that time—and we talked about how flowers uplift and plants heal. Figures 9 and 10 show some of the participants. Indeed, their smiles made Black joy evident in the phytogram workshop. Showing examples of how I would use the phytograms digitally helped the women relate the activity to the eventual video projection. Figure 11 is an example of a photo composition I made with their portrait and the phytograms they made as a takeaway for participation in the project.



Figure 9 Meredith Richardson and Sylvia Brown, Caribbean Canadian Seniors Group, Jamaican Canadian Association, June 2024.



Figure 10 Monica Watson, making phytograms, Caribbean Canadian Seniors Group, Jamaican Canadian Association, June 2024.



Figure 11 Postcard with phytograms and Pam Reynolds, seniors coordinator, Caribbean Canadian Seniors Program, Jamaican Canadian Association, June 2024.

I scanned (digitized) the phytograms at home. Scanning, like digitizing records, gave me time with the film material and an opportunity to revisit the plants we used and the people who made the phytograms. It is difficult to explain the phenomenology of the materials, but the process was akin to groundings with the materials. My thinking increasingly focused on what the final installation would look like, with clear ideas solidifying how the images and interviews might come together with these phytogram images and determining how best to represent the medicines in conjunction with the people. I began to consider the phytogram image on the filmstrip as a panorama photograph rather than one conforming to the frame-by-frame structure of film. I then set the image in motion through editing tools. I wanted to stay true to the plants, to how participants composed the phytograms, which they regarded as their own compositions, and to how the medicines help us feel and heal.

Reading through Sylvia Wynter, Rinaldo Walcott asks, What is the work of culture and aesthetics “intended to do”³¹³ politically and otherwise? I suggest that process cinema and the haptic experience of creating a film with one’s hands extend archival ontology. In the handmade film are the traces of embodied gestures. In the case of making phytograms in a community, the traces plants leave behind on the film, expressed as sound and/or image, connect to the affective experience of sharing stories. The plants prompted conversations about how to heal and create joy as an antidote to the physical and psychological pain of existing in and resisting a climate of anti-Blackness, all while participants carefully lifted the plants from the developer solution and pressed them down on the film. Like the imprints and genetic residues of the finger when working with clay, the film also absorbs the physical and affective traces of the hand through pressure, imprint, and gesture. Key experimental filmmakers have coaxed other possibilities out of process cinema so that the process reflects the intention to do more than the formal qualities and environmental approach seemingly afford. Deirdre Logue’s queer sensibilities, alongside the more-than-human relations in the processing of her films with plants at the Film Farm, produce scenes of self-immolating, nonsensical gestures. Describing what these images are intended to do, Janine Marchessault frames Logue’s image-making as “disaster aesthetics,” aligning the scratchy aesthetics of hand-processed film with the counternarratives of queer subjectivities in a heteronormative world: “Her body is treated like a piece of emulsion—processed, manipulated, scathed, strangled, taped, drawn upon, and cut to fit those heteronormative strictures.”³¹⁴ Jacquelyn Mills catalyzes her film experiments by burying her film in soil and exposing it to starlight, as in *Geographies of Solitude* (2022).³¹⁵ Her film experiments also create an archive of plant life and her time spent on an island off the coast of Newfoundland that is at risk of disappearing due to the impending disaster of sea level rise. In this archive of the Jamaican diaspora, the making of phytograms created a milieu in which an archaeology of knowledge³¹⁶ unfolded among community members as they traced their stories to origins or places while making phytograms on 35mm film. The phytograms archive a discourse on the practice of collective care, physical and psychological wound healing, and the complex feelings Jamaicans have towards the land

they are from but from which they are physically disconnected, and towards the land they live on but are made to feel they do not belong to. Like bodies trying to fit into a heteronormative world with air temperatures and political stakes rising, Jamaicans similarly live in the wake of the disaster of slavery that began on the now-drowning islands of the Caribbean.

Filming Black Caribbeanness

Early in the project, even before engaging community, I understood in my body's hesitation and in the way participants themselves wanted to be represented on camera that the research was not about filming "typical" gestures of the embodied archive, such as kissing teeth; dance movements that archive the hold of a slave ship³¹⁷ or predate capture in African folk dances such as the dinki mini;³¹⁸ and the leaning back in a slow stride that I identified in my son and his friend on that wintry school field trip. These gestures surface amongst Jamaican expressive culture but do not end there. Michèle Pearson Clarke's video installation *Suck Teeth Compositions (After Rashaad Newsome)* (2018) shows a genealogy of gestural utterances from women across the Black Caribbean and African diaspora. While I aim to highlight performative historical genealogies, I also want to reserve a degree of opacity. I felt that filming such performative archives in isolation decontextualized the gestures, isolating them in a way that reduced their archival potency. Aware also of my positionality as someone who does not read as Black but embodies plantation histories of enslavement, I was reluctant to ask community members to perform Blackness in front of the camera, knowing these images would be used not only for community spectatorship but mainstream spectatorship as well.

Cinema has a long history of racial (mis)representation and of stereotyping Black and other racialized peoples. Cultural gestures were caricatured in minstrelsy for the amusement of White audiences.³¹⁹ Aware of these histories, I chose to film close-ups with a handheld Bolex camera and use diegetic sounds disassociated from the image to counter ethnographic "authenticity" commonly associated with documentary films.³²⁰ The imagination—and perhaps the viewer's own body—is left to

fill in the visual of the gesture, prompted by the intonations, sounds, and specific words in the audio. This level of opacity operates as a firewall between those from the culture who will have access to much of its meaning through their own embodied records and memories, and those who are outside the culture and have no understanding of what the audio refers to.

The exception to the visual representation of gesture is the Heritage Singers' performances that interpret and exaggerate the gesture within the context of a song or dramatization. Contextualizing information is retained within this scenario,³²¹ though the movement itself should be regarded as theatrical rather than an authentic representation of quotidian life. Rather than strive for an elusive and perhaps nonexistent authentic reconstruction of an embodied archive, I leave the "spoken word, song, and body motions" to hermeneutics—the everydayness and dynamism of this archive are always already an interpretation. The audience's laughter signifies the interpretation of the everyday, as they see themselves mirrored in the performance.

Since the work of documenting the gesture was already embodied within the Heritage Singers' videotape archive, and since the staged photograph was far more familiar to older participants, I chose to film portraits instead. I directed my cinematographer, Sonya Mwambu, to shoot close-ups depicting participants' personalities, a sense of the space, and a sense of what it was like to be in the room. Moving portraiture became a window to the feeling I had sitting with the participants and developing an understanding of the importance they placed on the project, independent of my own intentions and goals. Building a relationship with the participants to execute these moving portraits helped me understand that such image-making involved a responsibility to the subject and how they wished to be represented to future generations.³²² Part of that self-representation is the recognition of Blackness and beauty beyond mere aesthetics. Indeed, Walter Rodney says as much: "But with the black brothers, you learn humility because they are teaching you. And you get confidence, too; you get a confidence that comes from an awareness that our people are beautiful. Beauty is in the very existence of black people."³²³

Film offers the beautiful. The materiality and surface of film lend a haptic aesthetic. Its graininess softens the surface of darker skin tones compared to the harshness of high-definition digital, pixelated video.³²⁴ Because the chemistry of plant processing can be unpredictable, I chose to send most of the film to a lab to ensure the preservation of the image and then incorporated plant-processed film in layering images. The autoethnography that emerges from my Black feminist framework takes advantage of the aesthetic properties of hand-processed film. In [*breaking down the house*](#), I used clips from my children's home movies taken with a Sony camcorder and a now obsolete Blackberry smartphone. There is also footage from my own collection of 16mm plant-processed film taken on my first trip to Jamaica in twenty years in March 2022. I was so detached from the island and preoccupied with the "survivals" of Jamaica in Canada that I thought it important to document contemporary island life. This footage features rare plants at the Institute of Jamaica, which has become a de facto archive of native plants; the footage also depicts scenes from Southfield, St. Elizabeth, where my father is from. Once a subsistence farm, the property was overgrown with guinea grass and more ornamental trees and plants as my grandparents grew older, although its fruit trees remained standing until Hurricane Beryl tore them down. It made sense to process this film footage with plants.

In order to develop the film back at home in Canada, I boiled sorrel flowers imported from Jamaica, along with plants from my garden such as magnolia and rhododendron, flowers I knew had enough phenols to combine with the solution of Tide laundry detergent (sodium carbonate) and vitamin C powder to react with the silver nitrate in the film emulsion. This reaction forms silver halide on the celluloid film and produces shapes we perceive as images. While I avoided using this handmade process with the images of community members to retain the smooth surface of the film and interrupt the image with as few scratches as possible, intuitively I felt the need to work aggressively with my hands. Perhaps this footage filmed in Jamaica was a way to process the energy I felt reconnecting to the island as an adult, reestablishing relationships to my relatives after family divisions had occurred over the course of repeated migrations, and to direct that feeling of political violence I had developed in my undergraduate

studies. I had listened to the fearful experiences my family related in their stories, and I even have a vague recollection of feeling that same fear as a young child. However, if I am honest, the handling of the film was a way to process the anger I felt having had no choice in the matter to migrate, having to witness racism directed at my parents, and having to process all the loss with no support, since we, the younger generation, were not seen as being affected by what happened “back home.” My handling of the film became a kind of catharsis. Following my compulsion to induce as many scratches as I possibly could, I vigorously rubbed the film together in the developer solution, pressing the plants into the film, aggressively rinsing it as if I were washing clothes. When I scanned and viewed the film, it looked unusable; there were so many scratches on it. I also noticed how the trees swayed as if in slow motion, though they were filmed at 24 frames per second. The movement of the palm and coconut trees was different from my memory, but I remember wanting to capture the quality of the wind blowing through the leaves at the time. I remember thinking that this footage taken in 2022 looked eerily like a hurricane.

If process cinema’s intuitive proclivities imprint different reactions on the film surface and evoke affective responses in my own body, I want to suggest that this method is a way of working through the future, now. Unlike digital video, in film there is no way of knowing what the image will look like. In my approach to filming and processing, I am open to accidents—what Helen Hill calls “disasters.”³²⁵ I approach filmmaking intuitively with a degree of disobedience, unconcerned with filming technically perfect images with an old analogue camera, and more inclined and aligned with experimental filmmakers who embrace the process of experimenting with different circumstances of camera settings, light exposures, and camera handling even before the uncontrollability of hand processing with plants. I simply feel my whole body “listening.” Similar to data used predictively for weather forecasting, the forces that went into the film, at least in my imagination, predicted the hurricane that would come two years later. The palm, coconut, and fruit trees were violently uprooted. Two weeks before the hurricane, I visited my ailing aunt who lived in the house. Within one week of my return to Canada, I had moved her to a nursing home down the road from her house, at her request. Another week after her move, the Spanish-wall

house, made of stone and red earth, the house she carefully restored, was destroyed by Hurricane Beryl. A wall had collapsed onto her bed. The house my grandparents built is now rubble. The projection *breaking down the house* features the hurricane segment, beginning at the 3:06 mark:

<https://vimeo.com/1015884767/efd046b847>. I am reminded of the late experimental filmmaker Helen Hill. While I know it's impossible that she predicted her own death in Hurricane Katrina with her journal of hand processing, titled *Recipes for Disaster*,³²⁶ I am left to wonder: What do plants and minerals tell us as we work with them?

Plants, Mordants, and Media

Listening to the stories of the community co-creators and watching their and my images, a narrative of plants and materials began to take shape regarding the medicinal and spiritual healing possibilities of plant medicines. Could these plants provide a kind of salve for one's memories as an affective outcome afforded by process cinema? This question became a core principle for activating the archives of the community and the foundation for thinking through future activations now. For communities affected by colonization and slavery, the researcher/artist should be thinking through how their activations could produce restorative outcomes. I argue that it is simply not enough to communicate new knowledge, but that, appended to the permissions given to engage with these archives, whether by community members or by donors to the archive, there is, or at least ought to be, a responsibility to facilitate healing.

I am interested in how Black/Caribbean peoples relate to plants as modes of survival—as food, medicine, camouflage. As an artist, I am interested in the relationship between film and plant materials, highlighted by the phenomenological experience of handling these materials. As a student of political economy, I ask myself (or are the materials compelling me to ask?) what it means to work with these materials by deconstructing the process and composition of filmmaking and thinking about the embodied labour and histories associated with the materials. In process cinema, washing soda (sodium carbonate) or laundry detergent and vitamin C react together with water and the phenols in plants to create a developer.

When celluloid film with its silver nitrate emulsion reacts to the developer, silver halide forms on the film as the image ranges from greys to black. Sodium carbonate itself is produced through the chemical reaction of salt and limestone. I think of the salty sea and the many crossings of the Middle Passage, Kala Pani, and Asian Pacific and the limestone on which the enslaved peoples landed, which Jamaicans endearingly call “the Rock,” a term that embodies a sense of home ascribed to this specific mass of limestone. I also think of the mothers and washerwomen who laboured along the riverside beating their clothes against the limestone and endured in the limestone great houses of plantation owners and middle- and upper-class Jamaicans to produce the beautiful clothing shown in archival photographs. Salty waters appear again in process cinema as a fixer that secures the silver halide on the celluloid (or polyester, as is the case with contemporary filmstrips.) When I work with silver in its nitrate and halide form, I also think about the history of silver extraction and the enslavement and genocide of Indigenous peoples at the hands of Spanish conquistadors in the Americas for the purpose of stealing land and mining silver. Cinema and the image on celluloid are always already tied up with colonialism, genocide, and slavery. Traditional chemical processing of celluloid is highly toxic, and much of the film footage taken in the community centres was processed in a film processing lab in this way. However, I want to advance the idea that making phytograms works against these toxic processes by using nontoxic chemicals (detergent and vitamin C) and the hand of community members to collaborate directly with the materials and make visible this shadow archive of plants and minerals.

Several experiments with celluloid, plants, and mineral dyes helped me think through how the extraction of colours from the homeland could literally shed light on the archive, perhaps towards a spectrum of healing.³²⁷ Through process cinema, I bridge histories and associations of colour with the historical use and production of dyes. For instance, I reference the labour of women who tinted and toned film prior to the introduction of colour film in the early 1900s.³²⁸ My historical research on plant dyes in Jamaica pointed to logwood bark, a purple dye from a tree in the area my family is from. Logwood also contributed to the latter part of the triangular trade in Black human beings. Black Caribbean poet M.

NourbeSe Philip's poetry collection *Zong!* is named after a slave ship that landed at the port of Black River, St. Elizabeth, Jamaica, in 1781. With 470 enslaved people on board, the misnavigation of the ship, headed by Captain Luke Collingwood, was at sea for more than four months instead of the usual four to six weeks. After sixty enslaved people died from dehydration and another forty threw themselves overboard because of the ship conditions, Collingwood conspired to throw 150 more people overboard in order to claim insurance compensation on their bodies as "destroyed cargo."³²⁹ It is at the port of Black River—*Zong!*'s destination—that logwood was exported to render European fashion black and blue. I use logwood to indicate the connection of the trade in Black bodies and goods and Black bodies as goods, the connection to the port and lands where my father's African ancestors came through and are from. Logwood paired with iron (ferrous sulphate) yields black and thus can be used to reference the trade in iron, and most meaningfully, the iron chains and tools of torture in the trade and punishment of Black bodies.³³⁰ I use logwood as a critical fabulatory material and violet colour to suggest those historical connections and further connect the colour purple to Alice Walker's invocation of purple in her writings. Walker conjures notions of Black women's creative potential to produce freedom, courage, and transformation in her concept of "womanism," which Shaunasea Brown applies to the Black Caribbean woman's experience in Canada.³³¹

I used sorrel, this time as a dye rather than a developer ingredient. Sorrel, a red hibiscus flower originating in West Africa, yields tones from red to purple, colours which evoke the celebratory, namely the promise of freedom embodied in the Jamaican sorrel drink enjoyed at Christmastime. A core ingredient of the drink is rum, which is also used in libations to cleanse the body and soul of spirits and sickness. Used as a mordant to react with the dye and celluloid, Wray & Nephew white overproof rum, widely regarded by Jamaicans as the most potent³³² and authentic rum produced on the island, created an opaque marbling effect on the film. Sorrel dye and rum mordant gesture towards the celebratory and spiritual traditions that continue in the diaspora. Another experimental dye I used was annatto seed, which I purchased from the local rural African Caribbean store in Shelburne, Ontario, where I also purchased the

sorrel. The seed is indigenous to the Americas and conjures memories of my mother's cupboard and her story about how patties got their colour from annatto. Another mordant I used was alum, a by-product of bauxite processing, a mineral extracted from the red earth and used to make aluminum. Alcan, a Canadian multinational, was one of the largest employers in Jamaica, and up to the 1970s, Jamaica was the largest exporter of bauxite and alumina to the United States.³³³ I recall living in Mandeville shortly before we emigrated and having a White Canadian neighbour. The story of aluminum and Canada filters through the oral histories of Vincent Conville, as well as my own.

My focus on plant dyes and mordants centres women's labour transnationally in culinary and medicinal preparation, fabric dyeing, and tinting and toning film. Men's labour and the labour of the earth are referenced through the extractive industries of mining bauxite to produce aluminum. Thus, plants and minerals articulate the archive of their own stories in relation to Jamaica's afterlives of slavery and Jamaicans' ambitions to reach a horizon of freedom in Canada. As I cook up purple and black for these ingredients and bring them together with other colours, I make/heal my way to belonging in Canada. This remixing of parts of the place I come from with the performance of living on this land in Saugeen Ojibway Nation Territory bears an aesthetic that embodies the spatial situatedness of my diasporic being. I include myself in Brown's conceptualization of "be(long)ing" as a 1.5 generation immigrant whose creative practice is a tool for negotiating the "systemic and institutional mechanisms that negate Black presence" in Canada while "offering new possibilities for building second-generation relationships to the Caribbean."³³⁴ Moreover, with these dyes I claim my children, who have a German father and are featured in the video projection [*breaking down the house*](#), as part of this Black Caribbean heritage and its living archive of movements. In *breaking down the house*, my son films himself as he "takes care" of his little brother while I'm at work, which is to say, he is simply being a young boy. His nonchalance in his self-portrait of him smacking gum forecasts what would ensue when I left to go to the United States to study a few years later, working as a live-in part-time caregiver for someone else's children so that I could pay tuition. Without intending to, I rehearsed the movements Black Caribbean domestic workers made before

me and aligned my present and future with those Black women. I also experienced what Hyacinth Jones calls the heartbreak hearing about her children's experiences, similar to the children's experiences (now as adults) articulated by Gertrude King, Alton Stephenson, and Melody Brown. I try to address this collective and individual heartache in the previous video on domestic workers:

<https://vimeo.com/1029860908/c84dc2dc9b?share=copy>

Another aspect of diasporic being is represented in the projection *Long Time Gyal*, featuring the Heritage Singers. The group was formed in 1977 as a response to their experiences as Black newcomers in Toronto and as way to heal their homesickness and loneliness.³³⁵ Dyed film was used in the above films as I thought about what plants do for healing. The film stills below (figures 12–14) show the aesthetic of these dyes in isolation from other images.

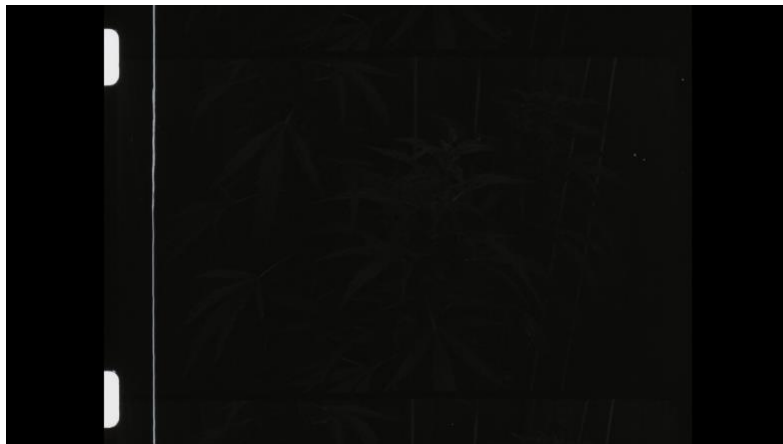


Figure 12 Dyed film: logwood with iron sulphate. Film still.

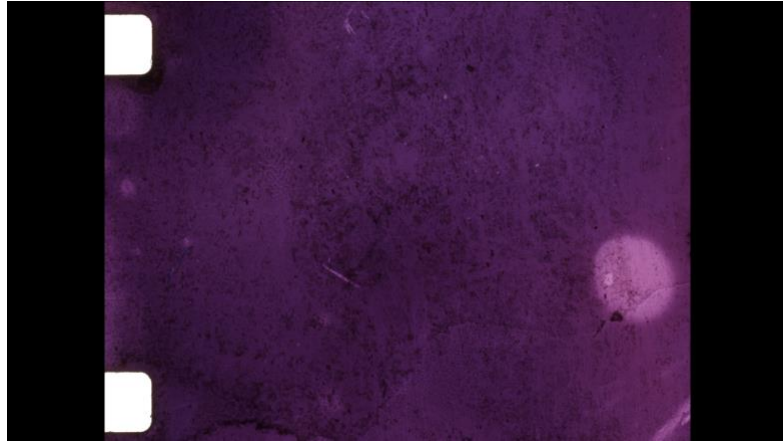


Figure 13 Dyed film: logwood. Film still.



Figure 14 Dyed film: sorrel and annatto. Film still.

I also used phytograms in the projections as imaginaries with the potential for healing and survival. Process cinema embodies these historical conjunctures across human and nonhuman registers and reconnects our stories to our environments. The pictorial registration of plants and minerals creates markings visible to the eye when the film is projected. They constitute a kind of quiet oppositional writing of a counter-archive, referencing historical and contemporary exploitation along with efforts to resist through relational aesthetics, in which a work of art is constituted by social relations that subsume a material expression.³³⁶ I extend Bourriaud's notion of "relational" to include the nonhuman as participants in an artwork. Process cinema methods register the more affective qualities of community-engaged

image-making beyond what is humanly possible to control. These affective registers signify the nonhierarchical relations between humans and all our relations. The images of community I've placed within the embrace of the phytogram projections signify complex spatial relations beyond plants. The phytograms' watery aesthetics, as shown in the video taken at a seniors Christmas celebration (<https://vimeo.com/1014600478/f8ac21c6cb>), remind me of the sea and of the interconnections Andrea Davis draws between the histories of Black and South Asian diasporas—and, I would add, Hakka Chinese—peoples through the trope of the sea. Walking into a room with these projections aligns these embodied histories of Black/Caribbean intersections with plants and minerals to the living archive of the contemporary diasporic body.

My creation process also attunes to the materials, technology, and people in service of a set of moving images—archival and new—to highlight some of the knowledge keepers and storytellers in the community. While new 16mm film, video, and audio were recorded, digitization allowed for the further remediation of photography, vinyl records and cassettes, and older video formats such as VHS archives across various media. The media formats required careful physical handling and prompted consideration of how traditional archival practices of accessing, preserving, describing, and exhibiting the material intersect with community archival practice.

The decision to create new analogue media archives arose out of research at conferences around the vulnerability of media formats; analogue film has, to date, remained the most robust of these formats. The resurgence of celluloid film as an artistic medium offers some of the community-building possibilities that Sylvia Wynter assigned to aesthetics. Wynter best frames the process cinema methods of this project by asking, in her critical essay on Black film, “What does aesthetics do? What is its function in human life?”³³⁷ Thinking through human “forms of life” as a congruency of all organic life and discursive ontologies and socialities, Wynter’s approach to aesthetics is, I suggest, a Caribbean relational approach that is very close to Indigenous ways of knowing and the concept of all our relations, about which I have previously written regarding Glissant’s poetics of relation.³³⁸ Process cinema embodies her

description of aesthetics as a transcultural expression of life itself—“the context of the evolution of cooperative behaviours, from that between cells to that between peoples, with both forms of cohesion being based on differing forms of communications whether chemical or, in our case, discursive-semantic.”³³⁹ Although Wynter did not anticipate the development of process cinema methods, she laid the foundation for the conceptual possibilities of documenting Black/Caribbean life with plants on film. Therefore, in expanding the methods of process cinema to document Black life, I highlight the poignancy of her philosophical interventions at the heart of what it means to do process cinema more generally.

Preserving older media formats, including photographs and textual materials, requires a Caribbean feminist ethics of care when it involves engaging with community members and their material archives. I applied this notion of care to the handling of both paper and audiovisual records of the Heritage Singers. Acknowledging my amateur status as an archivist and lacking the specialized knowledge to care for material archives, I enlisted the help of Melissa Nelson, a Black Jamaican descendant and professional archivist, who helped me organize the Heritage Singers collection. While technicians at Cinemobilia processed and digitized each tape on a pro bono basis for the project, Melissa and I arranged the textual and photographic records, sorted through duplicates, and discussed the significance of the materials to the donor and to the wider society. We further deliberated the arrangement of the records and what participatory descriptions of the photographs would mean in practice. Grace Lyons herself instituted a process of vetting the documents before donating. She reviewed and made copies of every single textual record and asked me multiple times whether she would continue to have access to the records. Sometimes records would pass back and forth between her home and mine over weeks as she came to terms with letting them go. This process indicated the anxieties a community member might have regarding losing control of their archives and the fears of not having access to them in the future. I engaged Lyons throughout each step of the donation process and followed her sense of space and time so that she could sort through her records according to her comfort levels, and further reassured her on several occasions that she would have access once donated.

Digitizing the VHS tapes from the collection made their content visible once more and uncovered some Caribbeans-in-Canada treasures. There are skits interpreting a life between two islands—Turtle Island and Jamaica; a CBC documentary; a stint on Citytv’s *Breakfast Television*; a televised educational video with Miss Lou offering advice on cervical cancer for a Black female audience in Toronto; and a radio interview on CBC. There were also recorded anniversary events, such as the thirtieth anniversary of Jamaica’s independence, which highlighted active, often middle- and upper-class members of the community and their intra- and transnational reputational concerns regarding how policing, immigration, and deportation affected the perception of diaspora living abroad. The Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections will eventually upload the files to the York digital archive. In the meantime, the media sculpture *NansiRoachy* will make the bulk of these files available to the community for viewing, though under specific conditions of time and location.

Storing digital media raises important issues of remediation that factor into preservation methods. The instability of a medium—whether body, tape, or binary code—threatens information loss and induces a system of seemingly excessive copies. With this medium precarity in mind, this research thinks through processes of care in digital preservation. I copied the video files from Cinemobilia to a master archive-quality hard drive and again copied the files onto another hard drive. This second drive will be given to the Heritage Singers when this project is complete. A third backup copy exists on another hard drive that I use for my own purposes in accessing the videos to edit for the curation of this Jamaican diasporic archive. Similar processes of copying and backing up are used for the born-digital/digitized film and born-digital audio and video.

While digitization in different formats affords preservation and online access, it further underscores the deeper layers of remediation evident in clips that show television broadcasts taped onto VHS, radio broadcasts on cassettes, films archived on VHS, and so on. The Heritage Singers VHS tapes show Black videographers participating in the production of the image of a Black community. One of my objectives in creating a media sculpture was to multiply the remediation effect by remixing the material

particularities of various media—the grain of 16mm film; the scratches and artifacts on hand-processed film, audio tape, and digital data—and juxtaposing the *mise-en-scène* of footage with documentation of those operating the camera, a strategy to frame the gaze of the footage as one in concert with the subjects before the camera.³⁴⁰ Moreover, making the layers of mediation, in all their “imperfections,” accessible to the senses highlights the passage of time and the differences in technologies that recorded and replayed events, as well as the potential for loss of archives if playback technologies are not also preserved. I regard the process of digitizing as itself an act of care, with the hope that the standardized digital files will continue to be supported by a media player in the future.

I have come to understand digitizing as a process of caring for the material, somewhat analogous to the phenomenology of working with film in process cinema. For example, I digitized two collections of vinyl records and became conscious of my own embodied gestures of record-cleaning as a young person, not as a memory in the sense of recall, but in the unconscious way in which my body held knowledge of a movement learned in the 1970s and 80s. I observed the ease with which I imparted my own transgressions into the material through unintended scratches when wiping away years of dust, fingerprints, and other unidentified dirt belonging to the vinyl’s own material history. Indeed, while some records were cleaned, I digitized others with debris still adhering to the vinyl. Congruent to the action of plants on film in process cinema, this residue allows the material to audibly express the documentation of its interactions with its surroundings and time, constituting an audible archive of dust, skin, and oil. There is one reggae record I chose not to digitize. Still encased in its original plastic seal, the recording remains pure and untouched, a time capsule of when the record was published. Not listening preserves the quality of sound but also prevents one from the experience of the music and stories.³⁴¹

The production of knowledge through embodied archiving methods is crucial in thinking about record-making and -keeping. These records include such examples as Miss Lou’s rendition of Anansi stories that articulate adaptation to the flora and fauna of a Caribbean environment; folk songs and proverbs that relay new ways of resisting and surviving the system; and dance and gestures in the

Heritage Singers' performances that reference enslavement and its afterlife, from shuffling feet, to washing clothes, to corporal punishment. I suggest that these gestures are not simply methods of memory recall but epistemological methods to bring new language, new movements, and new ways of resisting that can and are transferred into the lexicon of descendants of the forcibly displaced and enslaved. If migration poses a break in the conscious transmission of this knowledge, the digitization of these audiovisual records can help descendants retain what the body already knows when it walks into a room. I am reminded of Dionne Brand's provocation: "Think about black futures as a practice that pulls from the past to imagine the future—as well as the collectivity of those who dreamed our lives for us before we arrived; how will we both enact these present-futures they imagined and do the same for those who follow us?"³⁴² Remediation of audiovisual records is one way to (re)enact these liberatory futures.

These archives of slavery surface time and again in the stories of interviewees. The repertoires of Miss Lou and the Heritage Singers provide linkages to the cultural genealogy of contemporary reggae, dancehall, rap, dub music, and movement forms—connecting Canada to Jamaica and the wider Black Atlantic diaspora. What proclivities would the body experience in its sensory uptake of the mediated material? The above examples of generational knowledge production and dissemination underscore the crucial role performers and interpreters of the embodied archive have in maintaining the genealogy of the archive, if not its meaning over time. Jamaican folk songs, as Jamaican popular music does today, recorded the everyday. In my interviews with six members of the Heritage Singers, they each related one of the folk songs to their own experiences in Jamaica. Grace Lyons referred to these songs as "the news." "Hill an' Gully," for example, is a Maroon play song and work song recounting the experience of riding donkeys or rolling up and down the hills in Jamaica.³⁴³ The six members of the Heritage Singers demonstrated the dance to "Hill an' Gully," which is derived from the dinki mini, a dance with African origins, and suggests a retention of work songs structured around a call-and-response form, competitive dancing, and movements related to physical labour—for instance, the "hurting back" move (time code 1:09–1:18 in the video link below)—as well as movements and gestures corresponding to African

dance.³⁴⁴ The video below shows Phil Campbell demonstrating the song, with Grace Lyons and the rest of the focus group joining in:

<https://vimeo.com/1025736116/b9553966e9?share=copy>

In interviews on Zoom and in person, Phil Campbell explained how the dinki mini surfaces throughout Afro-Creole mento music and dance and continues to influence contemporary dancehall movements.

Form and Digital Functionality: The Shapeshifting *NansiRoachy*

Despite prioritizing digitization in the dissertation, my justification for not digitizing everything is to keep the body central to the archive. I attune to Griffin's insight that oral traditional forms "provide indispensable contextual details in order to place the writing text in its rightful order,"³⁴⁵ which Michael Moss and David Thomas infer "cannot be confined to paper, box and reading room."³⁴⁶ Indeed, Moss and Thomas refer to the risks associated with consulting only digital copies of material records:

The most significant silence of the archive is that even those records that originally had a degree of liveness and were intended to be spoken are now seen as dead texts to be read in silence and not as words to be heard. Doing this, we believe affects their validity and distorts our ability to interpret them. We take our cue from performance studies in which the conviction runs deep that to record or document a performance is to destroy or, at the very least, contaminate it.³⁴⁷

The reality of contemporary life is that younger generations orient themselves increasingly to a digital interface with the world around them. A website does not necessarily engage the young or the old and is prone to obsolescence, not to mention subscription renewals. I suggest that those less inclined to research at an archives would be interested in accessing these records if the records were presented to them creatively and cognate with the visual culture of the community. My response to the dissertation's problematic of archival ontology, storage, and access is a mobile media sculpture the community could easily identify in its form as well as content. I call this sculpture *NansiRoachy*.

NansiRoachy brings the range of archival materials together and is the final stage of this research. Initially, thinking about contemporary Black artists such as Camille Turner, Isaac Julien, John Akomfrah, and BLKNWS, I imagined an installation with large projections, displaying large and small screens.³⁴⁸

However, the form of the media installation evolved and seemed to require something sculptural—an archive that could embody and preserve these histories rather than simply re-present them. The spider figure of Anansi emerged as a form I could interpret as a result of working with the community, hearing their stories, and listening to accounts reflecting deep respect and affection for Miss Lou and her revival of Anansi stories. Miss Lou’s performances and speeches feature throughout the Heritage Singers’ archives and the Louise Bennett-Coverley archives, revitalizing Anansi stories to affirm and preserve the Jamaican language and its oral-performative culture—its living, intangible archive. Miss Lou taught Jamaicans throughout the diaspora how to be proud of the language and their/our African heritage through Anansi stories and countercolonial teachings.

With community and culture as my starting point, I turned to traditional sculptural practices that abstract/shapeshift the real such that its essential form remains visible while the abstraction offers meaning beyond a realist representation. I use the form of Anansi as a signifier of Jamaicans in Canada. The *NansiRoachy* spider figure references West African Akan and Jamaican sculptural traditions, Louise Bourgeois’s *Maman*, feminism, children’s book illustrations, and Jamaican American artist Nari Ward’s invocation of Anansi in his installations. In the Jamaican oral tradition, Anansi is a trickster figure resisting dominant societal codes of enslavement to create situations to his own advantage. These crafty qualities became a symbol of resistance, innovation, and survivance in response to violent, oppressive systems and people. However, the arc of tricksterism can lean towards social justice *or* corruption and criminality, whereby bending social norms says less about corrective action and more about taking advantage of others for one’s benefit.³⁴⁹ Miss Lou herself admitted to the ways in which Anansi’s less commendable traits might hold society back.³⁵⁰

Since participants valued stories-as-archives and also valued repairing links to an African heritage, the Akan understanding of Anansi had various personifications and was brought into the meaning of the sculpture. Sometimes he was considered the creator of the world; in other stories, Anansi’s role is that of a mediator, the most powerful figure who could communicate with the Sky God

Nyame. In all stories, however, Anansi is the Lord of All Narratives, the keeper of stories. Anansi *is* the archives.³⁵¹ This conception of Anansi corresponds to Sylvia Wynter's concept of *homo narrans*, that what defines us as human beings beyond a biocentric conception of race is the compulsion to tell stories and mythologize as a way of producing knowledge.³⁵²

NansiRoachy addresses critiques of Anansi through the epistemological role of Black women in the community as the persons who primarily impart generational knowledge through familial and community networks.³⁵³ Miss Lou often references her grandmother in her performances, as did many participants when they talked about how they learned from their grandmothers. In my research, the women included Miss Lou, Judith Andrade, Grace Lyons and the women of the Heritage Singers, Melody Brown, Hyacinth Jones, Gertrude King, Pam Reynolds, Maureen Richardson, Alethia Stephenson, Sharon Wynter-Bowen, and many of the women in the Caribbean Seniors Group. The sculpture will have cockroach wings on its back to reference Aunty Roachy, a character Miss Lou invokes to teach moral lessons. These wings disrupt the conventionally male-oriented Anansi, signalling the core role women play in transmitting the stories and values of the culture.

I would like to make a final note on form. The Anansi figure incorporates suggestions from participants and feedback from scholarly talks, pointing towards the intended audiences for the archive. For all middle-aged and older participants, the objective of this archive and the reason for their participation was to remediate knowledge from oral narratives to internet-oriented youth both now and decades into the future. For one young parent, the importance of including children in my conception of community was noted. Since Anansi stories are traditionally told by a grandparent/parent/older relative to a child, the *NansiRoachy* recalls the (inner)child and embodies the different generations.

The approximate dimensions of the sculpture will be 9' h x 10' w x 6' d and are pictured below in figures 15 and 16. This rendering is an approximation of what the final form will be, subject to the found and manufactured parts available that will form the Anansi body.

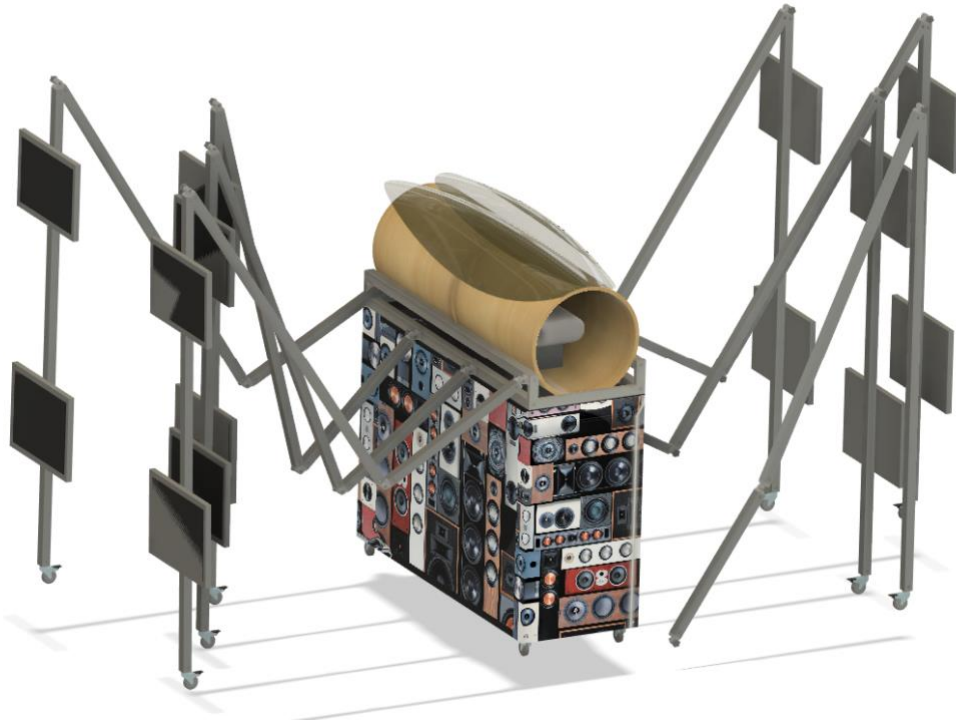


Figure 15 *NansiRoachy*, side view.³⁵⁴

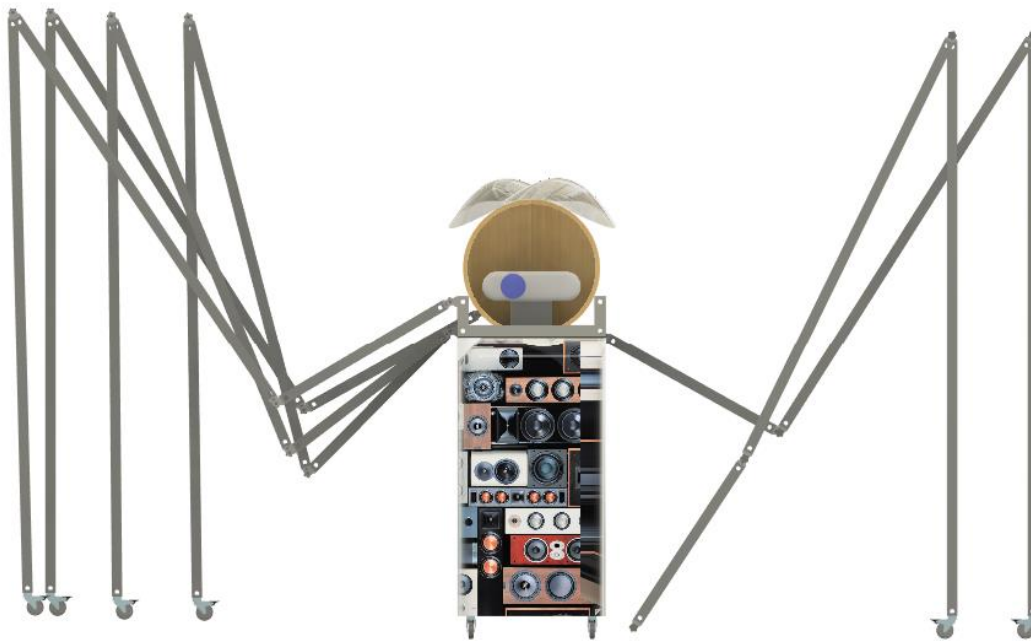


Figure 16 *NansiRoachy*, front view.

The choice of materials used in the sculpture stems from my knowledge of the material culture of Jamaica and the diaspora—the cardboard barrel, aluminum Dutch pots, found and repurposed objects—and translates my investigations in process cinema into the materiality of the archives. The lightness of aluminum affords mobility. This quality of lightness affected the history of aviation, space exploration, and cinematic technology, all of which depended on materials lighter than steel for greater portability.³⁵⁵ In its basic function, *NansiRoachy* reclaims the material from its problematic histories of mineral extraction and weapons manufacturing to make Other future histories possible. As a large-scale portable projector apparatus, the sculpture embodies a “future now” perspective that configures sound and image in new ways for Black diasporic connection—beyond fixed geographies—and towards a space of future belonging in contemporary dispersed communities. The projector-archives can be taken to different spaces for engagement.

Projecting from *NansiRoachy* on multiple screens will be images bathed in the coloured light derived from film tinted with plant dyes of logwood, annatto, and sorrel. The contents of the projections and screens yield complicated storytelling, where slavery’s afterlives reference situations of child abuse and abandonment, family separation, pursuance of ambition in a foreign country, denigration of people according to class, the fallout of racism, domestic violence, theft, and death—all sitting alongside accounts of resilience, resistance, financial success, and survival. The multivalent approach of expanded cinema’s screens and projections offers multiperspectival representations of the complicated facets of Black/Jamaican life. I also think of the remediation of the more negative facets of Anansi and hold space for these aspects as (mal)adaptations to colonialism, slavery, and capitalism, as well as resistance to them.

I acknowledge a temptation to romanticize Jamaican culture as an underlying sentiment in this project as a 1.5 generation Jamaican Canadian who faced a lot of shaming because of the country I came from and my multiracial background, factors that affectively disrupted my sense of intra-community and national belonging. I tend not to think about the negative aspects of Anansi. I decided to create a sculpture that could be deconstructed and reconstructed in place, allowing parts of *NansiRoachy* to be integrated

into other installations and uses according to how the installation is needed, then reconstructed as a whole again. The deconstruction references spatial dispersals such as migration, the dispersal of Caribbean families moving outside of the neighbourhoods in which they first created community, cultural dilution when marrying into other cultures or attempting to assimilate, family separation, and so on. The disassembling also references a resistance to the extreme trickster tendencies, seeking balance in its making and remaking, wherever the archives travels. The reconstruction of *NansiRoachy* shows resilience within this framework of disruption. The sculpture, therefore, embodies the ways in which diaspora takes up the spirit of Anansi and signals sustained transformation as the story travels to Canada.

I regard *NansiRoachy*, this media sculpture, as a performative archival imagining using cinematic technology and hybrid design to bring together cinematic, theatrical, and visual art forms. The spider figure, comprised of materials suggestive of Jamaican life, forms the skeletal structure to support computer monitors, loudspeakers, and projectors from which the content—the community records—plays back to an audience. The sculpture, embodying the shapeshifting possibilities of the mythical spider, incorporates moveable legs that adapt to the space and context through which the archives moves. The content includes digitized and digital materials, as well as copies of textual materials viewers can hold in their hands. My intention is to bring the archives to three different locations connected to the focus groups. Each location opens the possibility for programming different forms of engagement with the archive. Depending on the context, *NansiRoachy* will be timed and occur in three acts to mirror pantomime and folk theatre forms referenced in the content of Miss Lou and the HSC. Framing the exhibition in theatre terms signals to the audience that there is a beginning and thus creates a sense of anticipation. The hope is that the viewers remain engaged over a longer period of time. With a time-based sculpture, I intend to invite people in with the first act, pique viewers' curiosity with the second, then beckon them to directly engage by controlling the media and touching the materials in the final act.

In order to illustrate how the media sculpture can shapeshift with different contexts and spaces, the following outlines three possible ways the archives could be exhibited or shared:

Exhibition 1

Location: A short-term presentation at a community centre or school. There will be a presentation at the JCA in spring 2025. This one-day exhibition unfolds in three acts, adopting the structure of a play.

Act 1: Projections, 20 minutes. *NansiRoachy* enters the room. I plug in the sculpture. The music plays, then the lights switch off. A wall projection timed to the music begins. The projection consists of new 16mm footage, digitized VHS clips, digital photographs, and digitized photographs. Using a second projector, the images of phytograms made at the Seniors Group overlay the images of the community participants and their spaces. A third projector displays the colours of the dyed/tinted 16mm film. The sound will consist of quotations from participants' interviews in their own voice, quotations and clips of songs from the digitized archival media, and voiced quotations from textual materials. The voices are accompanied by music from the digitized vinyl recordings and from new recordings of participants playing the piano.

Act 2: Video composition, 10–20 minutes. The projection stops. The lights go on. The audience moves and orients towards the sides of *NansiRoachy* where the legs hold the computer monitors. The lights turn off. A composition of images in a quadrant-shaped video installation of eight monitors begins. The compositions consist of the Heritage Singers' archives, Miss Lou archives, and CBC archives featuring movements and sounds to demonstrate aspects of the embodied archive beyond the verbalized story.

Act 3: Community interaction, 60+ minutes. The screening stops. The lights go on. I invite the audience to interact with/touch the materials, which include copies of Montgomery Collection photos, Library and Archives Canada documents, Gertrude King family photos, a Judith Andrade documentary, and other materials. Viewers would have the option to listen and watch the HSC and Miss Lou media archives in their entirety on individual monitors using headphones.

Exhibition 2

I designed *NansiRoachy* to be operable at an outdoor event such as a block party or festival. My intention is to bring the archives to a block party in Shelburne, Ontario. The three acts would occur in reverse order considering the limitations of daylight.

Act 1, community interaction with the materials, would occur during the afternoon, perhaps accompanied by filming with the community and making phytograms. I would want to engage young people, especially in phytogram workshops and in using the Bolex camera to film the block party and document it from their perspective. I would then hand-process the film at home and enter it into the archive. The purpose of this is to demonstrate the continuity of a living, mediated archive. Act 2, the video composition, would transpire at dusk, followed by Act 3, a large projection at night before the dance party begins. The sounds would be modified to accommodate the background dancehall music already playing on the street.

Exhibition 3

The last configuration is an exhibition in a gallery setting, usually lasting six weeks to several months. As a knowledge mobilization activity, an exhibition at the Peel Art Gallery Museum and Archives (PAMA) is planned for December 2025. This exhibition will not have the structure of a theatre performance but instead consist of a constellation of moving and still images as well as reproduced textual documents. The projection will be looped with closed captions and be independent of the sculpture, *NansiRoachy*. The video composition will be against a wall and the clips looped. *NansiRoachy* will be placed in a corner and set up with the monitors facing inwards to the body, with large cushions or bean bag chairs underneath the figure and headphones hanging down from the monitors and media players. This will be a space primarily to invite children to get cozy and listen to the stories. Monitors will also be placed facing outwards and at sitting height, with room for a wheelchair to manoeuvre around and comfortable chairs to sit on for older people. A timed audio composition, made from the vinyl records and CDs collected, will interrupt the space at intervals and blast through the speakers. Included in this exhibition will be workshops for community engagement whereby an artist, or perhaps the archivist

Melissa Nelson, will invite community members to work creatively with family photos.³⁵⁶ Copies of these community-produced works could be hung on a wall in the exhibition space.

Finally, *NansiRoachy* is designed to be an iterative work, whereby the collection of stories can continue into the future through further community engagement and presentations. I cannot overstate the importance of the matrilineal networks that not only made this research possible but provided possibilities for exhibition. For instance, through multiple artistic and community engagements in the Creemore community, a neighbour became familiar with my work. Her trust in my approach prompted her to introduce me to a program director at PAMA who is part Jamaican. The program director, in turn, introduced me to the curator and archivist at PAMA, who subsequently offered the project an exhibition, as well as to her father, who provided an inside account of the recording industry during the 1980s. In the reckoning many institutions faced with the work of Black Lives Matter after the murder of George Floyd, this research suddenly aligned with PAMA's own priorities of filling the gaps in their archive. They were now seeking to engage Black communities in Peel Region. The relationship I built over time with Gertrude King, who was my first participant, opened another educational venue for *NansiRoachy*, the organization Making Change, headed by her daughter. The project aligns with their mission of antiracism, allyship, and Black empowerment through art in Simcoe County. The regional specificity of the research, therefore, addresses growing Black communities outside of Toronto.

Knowledge transmission of community archival research, in my experience, requires a great deal of labour to ensure that audiences show up for the events these cultural game-changers produce. Everyone is operating on a shoestring, and this project required a significant investment from the community and from me personally. To produce an occasion that engages people—be it a sound system, a theatre performance, a choir, a Jamaican anniversary dinner, or a picnic—requires a great deal of women's (free) labour and also men's, labour I see reflected in the Jamaican Canadian Association funds and in the Heritage Singers Canada funds. My hope is that the labour of participants, combined with my own labour and the resources possible through this dissertation, serves the community well into the future.

Archives are inherently built for the future and experienced in the now.

CHAPTER 5

Conclusion: Black Diasporic Archival Practice

This research-creation project, “Jamaican Diasporic Counter-Archives: Performative Archival Imaginings in Ontario, Canada,” introduced a new community archive into York University Libraries’ Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections. The research materials, both textual and audiovisual, will become their own fonds, alongside and connected to the metadata for the Heritage Singers fonds, whose accession was an output of this research. Although efforts were made to avoid some of the colonial tendencies of the institution through community engagement, careful description of the records, and digitization of as much as possible, archival power, embedded into the structure of the archives, prevailed due to lack of transparency, lack of practical knowledge on the part of the researcher (despite “book knowledge”), and lack of personnel resources at the institution to allocate time and effort to addressing these issues, despite good intentions. However, given the aging caretaker of the Heritage Singers records, the lack of anyone else to preserve them, and the desire of the artistic director and the group to be recognized as historically significant via an archival fonds in their name, accession to the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, while imperfect, was still the best choice for their collection, and will also be the best choice for the records from this research. It takes spatial and financial resources to preserve records, as well as expertise. Nonetheless, these are counter-archives. As a representation of a Black Caribbean community, the records support counternarratives to the mainstream governmental and societal accounts of who belongs here.

The totality of this project’s records—the material records, both textual and audiovisual, and the immaterial, embodied records—lies between the custodial model for community archives and a post-custodial one. In the former, the archives possess the records and make them accessible to the community; such a model suits situations where material records cannot be cared for in the community due to disinterest, resources, aging, or death. A post-custodial model maintains the records in the community and makes them accessible through digitization, most often made available through a website for public

access.³⁵⁷ In this project, some records are preserved in institutional archives such as the CTASC and at Library and Archives Canada. Some of the donations to these archives were made possible through doctoral students' interventions in the archives, such as through this project, or through the research of Vincent Conville, also a participant in this project. Thanks to Archive/Counter-Archive and its digitization lab, Cinemobilia, the VHS tapes (which have a limited lifespan of about thirty-five years) were digitized and preserved at the CTASC, allowing me to share digital copies with the founder of the Heritage Singers. Moreover, my own efforts to scan photographs have allowed participants such as Gertrude King to keep her family archives and share them with the larger community and the general public, which was something she was motivated to do.

This Jamaican counter-archive sways between these two models of archival preservation and access, reflecting the skepticism with which the community regards Canadian institutions and their own descendants' ability or willingness to preserve the records, if they value them at all. Moreover, the distributed structure of the community's records across families, individuals, churches, and governmental institutions is a mode of insurance against destruction from disaster. As indicated in the introduction, lack of access to movie camera equipment implied there would be few examples of analogue film in the community. In fact, home movies on celluloid film are so rare that not one example surfaced during this research. That is not to imply there are none in the community, only that many White families' experience with 8mm home movies, for instance, was not shared by many families in the Jamaican diaspora.

Disaster is not hypothetical during this era of climate change, especially for a Caribbean community. I am reminded of the one photo album remaining from my father's family photos after Hurricane Ivan. A cousin saved the album just before Hurricane Beryl hit. Communities, like extended families, are networks of archival storage that together create a larger narrative of one's place in the world. These communities' geographical distribution creates challenges in terms of access but also ensures the survival of some of the records.

The project has drawn attention equally to the importance of the living or embodied records and to the place of the individual story as part of a larger community of records. The inclusion of personal oral histories reflects a methodology of archiving that rang true for participants and helped build trust that moved them to participate. This living archive lies at the core of the research problematic of archival ontology in the community—what are the archives (records) and how would an archives (architecture) function to fulfill both repository and accessibility requirements?

I have engaged with critical archival theory and Black feminism to think about alternate forms of archival practice, from collection to preservation to access. Critical archival theory helped me think through the types of records to look for and think about oral traditions and their mediation as correspondent modalities to record history. The framework illuminated differences in power between the researcher and the archivist, between the researcher and the community, between the community and the archivist, and between the community and the institution. Despite efforts to minimize those imbalances, community members ultimately relinquish their power when they donate their records to the archives. The platform for negotiating the terms remains the signing of the donation agreement. Creating documents in plain English and revealing the possibilities that could be written into the agreement would be a good start to decolonizing the archives. Developing community-driven protocols tailored to each community would do more of this work.

The frameworks of Black/Caribbean feminism helped me to identify power dynamics of gender, race, disability, and class and ensured I had a wide representation of participants while finding ways to address my own positionality. The assemblage of various sources of data—of individual stories from different generations, performance documentation of the Heritage Singers, and music recordings—represents people at the intersections of identities. I anticipate that the presentation of the data will further produce affective and perhaps even ethical relationships between the viewer and the media. The counter-archive of *NansiRoachy*, therefore, builds on Patricio Dávila's recognition of the subjectivity of storytellers in the critical visualization of an assemblage³⁵⁸ precisely through the matrilineal networks of

care that I anticipate will be felt, rather than directly perceived, by the viewer. The audience response remains to be evaluated, but a preliminary showing of footage shot at the JCA Caribbean Seniors Group received a warm response and a request to film more, so that everyone who wants to be documented will be. My hope is that younger generations will also notice the affective registers that hail them to the community of Anansi's descendants as a body and collective within which they can fully experience be(long)ing.

My own experience in making and viewing the media evoked such a response in my body. Particularly poignant for me is the video *Domestic Workers*. The film footage of Shelburne participants and myself juxtaposed with audio of the participants talking about separation from their mothers because of the Domestic Worker Scheme affects me profoundly. I watch how the phytograms cradle the archival images of the women affected by that scheme and how the medicinal dyes wash over the footage of participants who are descendants of that generation. Their voices recount the pain of separation from their mothers. I was able to express how hardship and joy coexist within community members. And then I saw myself within that uncomfortable tradition of mothers leaving children for a better life, because I had once made the same choice to leave family and study in the United States. I had felt that deep archive of pain with ancestors of the domestic worker scheme. Though my circumstances were somewhat different, I could especially relate to the women who strived for something beyond the restrictions placed on them. Their narratives were parts of my own story. Without conflating my experiences with theirs, I could recognize where our stories intersected and saw and felt a sense of belonging to that larger community story. Such affects experienced by the viewers and makers also belong to this counter-archive.

The findings of this research include the data sets of stories and media archives as well as material records that are now available to the broader community and to the public. These findings will be disseminated at exhibitions and other public presentations, and eventually through the Clara Thomas archives and Special Collections online search tool and repository.

Another set of findings concerns the interactions with community. Within the confines of a dissertation timeline, the expectations for assembling media archives from personal collections are quite limited. This research relied heavily on my having already known some of the participants involved. Others, for whom I was someone new or strange, were hesitant to digitize their personal archives if it meant they would be shared publicly. This response indicates a desperate need to develop community protocols and procedures easily understood by donors and academics and amateur archivists alike, to ensure ongoing consent for the publication of community records and the remediated use of those records. Generally, when a donor signs the informed consent forms they relinquish all control over their images, although I have agreed to seek additional consent before any future publication of these images. The long-term use of the images makes the practicality of ongoing consent challenging for a small community archive without the infrastructure and resources of an official archives to track donors and their descendants for permissions.

Partnerships with large institutional projects such as Archive/Counter-Archive, which had the resources and technical skills to digitize media, were essential to the success of this project. The cost of digitization would have been prohibitive, even for some institutional archives, much less for the community. Considering the skepticism Black, Indigenous, and racialized communities have in regard to official archives, public funds would be necessary to augment private funds to establish collections in a custodial or post-custodial model with official archives. The Hellenic Heritage Foundation Greek Canadian Archives, for example, relied on wealthy donors to form a separate charitable foundation and hire an archivist to continue digitizing and publicly sharing copies of their records, which the CTASC does not have the resources to do. The CTASC's role is instead to simply preserve the records and make them accessible for viewing in their reading room and for copying in-house. Communities with lesser means have more difficulty activating the records without the resources to copy and exhibit them. There remains, therefore, a dependency on ad hoc funding and opportunity to share the narratives of *NansiRoachy*. Moreover, archives have certain priorities (or biases) and stipulations for what they want to

collect. The Archives of Ontario, for instance, while expressing publicly the gaps in the archives, was not interested in this collection per se; but they were interested in one particular family's records for their collection. When priorities are determined by the institution rather than the community it encourages a more distributed representation of the community's records. I do not believe it is necessarily a disadvantage to have a distributed collection across different provincial locations, since Jamaicans, as regards this diasporic archive, live all across the province. Moreover, a disaster to one location will not necessarily cause damage to another. However, such distributed archives require a centralized finding tool to locate the archives easily if the community is to have meaningful access.

Another possibility to make the records publicly accessible is the approach taken in this dissertation—building a mobile counter-architecture to colonial archives. The affordances of a research-creation methodology helped me imagine together with participants what this architecture might be. It has resulted in a media sculpture capable of storying and presenting the living archives of the community to broader audiences. Its materiality embodies the histories of labour and mineral extraction, namely in its aluminum legs. Before the labour, there was the soil in which the bauxite mineral was contained. *NansiRoachy's* aluminum is, in fact, our home soil transformed into a new configuration, “a farin.”³⁵⁹ Despite the expanse and weight of this giant spider and its heavy stories, aluminum imagines the community embodied in a “lightness of being,”³⁶⁰ one that can carry us to outer space, even as it grounds us on the “dut.” Its making-do aesthetics³⁶¹ embody the Jamaican proverb “every mikkle mek a mukkule,” which reassures that even when one has to be thrifty, a larger outcome is possible. The proverb underscores the financial and material challenges Black Atlantic peoples face in this long emancipation. Thus *NansiRoachy's* materiality transmutes narratives of an African and Afro-Creole past into a “future now” archives—a digitally oriented, portable, robotlike figure fuelled with mythological meaning, oriented towards Jamaicans living in Canada now and for generations to come. Within that futurity, the shapeshifting mythology of Anansi—Lord of All Narratives of Black peoples from western Africa, the Caribbean, and Canada, and keeper of all the narratives of the animals and plants they encounter in their

surroundings—is perhaps one way to approach dwelling on Indigenous lands. Through *NansiRoachy*, it could be possible to tell a story of stolen bodies on stolen lands on Turtle Island or in the Caribbean and relate those histories to Indigenous peoples here. We could share trickster methods, with their shapeshifting transformations and possibilities, to imagine and implement the futures we want to give on and with in the now. The endurance of shared archiving methodologies through oral traditions ensures we retain and retell our histories in a countermove against assimilation into mainstream Canada. The recognition and retention of these histories might foster mutual recognition of the oral traditions of Indigenous peoples as caretakers of this land and our shared responsibility in caring for the land and each other.

Maybe. Hopefully.



Figure 17 Digital photo by Adrian Kahgee, on Saugeen Ojibway Nation Territory, July 2024.

These relations are already and organically underway through art and music, as the advertisement in figure 17 indicates, taken by my artist co-conspirator, Adrian Kahgee. A resident of Shelburne, which

is on Saugeen Ojibway Nation Territory, performed at this convert in Neyaanshiiniiming (Cape Croker). He happens to be a cousin I met through the recruitment process.

As I write this dissertation, *NansiRoachy* continues to unfold. New connections between narratives sinter together in my brain and demand expression as a mediated work. I fail to keep up with the stories that want to be woven together and shared, and it is indeed the stories that converse with the materials and objects of the sculpture that take on a life of their own. Of all things, a headboard I inherited wants to join the archive. It is made of *lignum vitae*, the national tree of Jamaica and also the hardest wood in existence. I am reminded of the meaning of its Latin name: wood of life. This living archive is drawing materials into itself, and indeed *lignum vitae* trees show up in some of the films. As the artist-researcher, I desire to balance this heterogeneity of objects, archives, media, and artwork and am open to the records denying me permission to shape that which won't be subject to control. I'd like to find a way to include that headboard, or more realistically the *Gleaner* newspapers³⁶² in which it was wrapped and which I cited earlier in this chapter in referencing bauxite exports of the 1970s. I am open to collaborating with ancestors, though sometimes there can be argumentation. These are the kinds of negotiations underway during the construction of *NansiRoachy*: how to honour the images and voices of ancestors and how to listen to them in the here and now as they stand next to you. I have tried to suppress my spiritual upbringing, yet my ancestors utterly refuse to allow me. Through the process of making the media and sculpture, I am only now understanding what possibilities there are for diasporic archives—the kinds of architectures that hold space for the unsaid and unseen, be it the hauntings of ancestors or the hidden transcripts of language, movement, and rhythm, or the aftereffects that produce healing.

This research has shown the different ontologies of Jamaican diasporic archives and makes linkages to Black archival practice more broadly and the kinds of knowledges this practice produces. Some knowledge is oriented to the public, while others are left restricted to community-deciphering practices. Migration and disasters of contemporary life underscore the need for a flexible, multivalent response to the preservation of the archive due to perpetual threats to Black peoples' personhood and

belongings, be they natural disasters or the everyday systemic violence that began with the development of the Middle Passage, what Christina Sharpe refers to as “the weather.”³⁶³ The body alone is no longer the primary form of Black archival practice, though it continues to inform community identities. We are experiencing a digital turn regarding archival practice globally, to which this research responds with hybrid forms of digital, communal, and embodied archiving that integrate mobility as Black spatiotemporal survivance. I refrain from recommending institutionalizing any form of what a Black archives could be or do. Instead, the provisional tense of “could be or do” is the space of movement where Black archives dwell, with changing interpretations, innovating technologies, and yet-unknown practices of knowledge production, preservation, and transmission, ready to pivot with any new historical conjunction.

In that sense, this research on Jamaican Canadians was conducted precisely within the modes through which Jamaican archival practice unfolds, and this has generated a research-creation output that embodies the creative sensibility attributed to creolization. In a deeper sense, this research spurs thinking alongside ideas and movements of Black infrastructures, which created those Maroon, Garveyite, and Rastafarian choreographies that establish alternate routes to an equitable society. I do not take the route of prescriptive cultural policy—except to flag the proverbial “these initiatives need money”—and instead leave ahead something more provisional. How do we create something open to a relational shapeshifting where we embrace transformation and are vulnerable to one another; where our stories survive climate catastrophes and migrations through distributed archives? Maybe these archives float. Maybe they fly to outer space or get buried deep into the soil. Either way, the soil of Jamaica remains relevant, as aluminum is uniquely capable of a subterranean undercommons *and* an Afrofuturistic outercommons of diasporic archives.

The remediation of these archives occurred along two incongruent avenues—remixing, reusing, and juxtaposing older with new media, on the one hand; and imparting remedies into the film material to be projected onto the body and surroundings, on the other. Retaining the “spoken word, song and body

motions” of the archive preserves the contextual elements so that future generations can decipher their meaning. Process cinema methods juxtaposed with archival media content are one way to offer alternate meanings; the creative process is always already producing more than what the artist intends. An affective charge present in the retelling of the archive could find translation through intuitive handling of the film material, accentuated through the editing. Process cinema methods also allowed the academic in me to step back and let the process itself—in co-creation with participants—express what we cannot say. If Jamaican, as oral-performative expression, retains its subtextual subversiveness,³⁶⁴ then rest assured that the archival architecture and its poetic content of records retains this tradition of alternate meanings.

The research data itself—the assemblage of the community’s records—holds considerable potential for further research. One of the generative areas of future research would be to address the slippery notion of class within the diaspora. In sidestepping the anthropological approach, I could not entirely avoid an ethnographic lens. Notable was the largely middle-class background of the participants, a bias due to the snowball method of recruiting people already known to the researcher. I attempted to counter that bias by engaging the Caribbean Seniors Group at the JCA, which I presumed would have a wider representation of class. The data ultimately shows a decidedly fluid categorization of class: Many were poor who came with little means to start a new life in Canada. A middle-class household in Jamaica might be working class in Canada. Those with postsecondary formal education might be construed as upper class in Jamaica but working class in Canada. Finally, many may have been born into what were essentially working-class families while considering themselves middle class. In my own family history in Canada, my parents at various times worked in offices, warehouses, owned small businesses, and had no work, as their perceived and actual status continually fluctuated. More research is needed to understand how diasporic experiences challenge class categorizations.

I turn, perhaps unexpectedly, to C. L. R. James’s theorizing of how the West Indies cricket team played against the British. The nascent independence of most Caribbean countries, along with the hope to overcome slavery’s afterlife on some horizon, instilled much verve into the West Indies players. They

discovered new ways to move their bodies by tapping into the knowledge of a collective corporeal physics, along with a necessary aesthetic drive to create something beautiful beyond the boundary of slavery and colonialism. James regards these movements of innovation in the sport as an art form.³⁶⁵ Similarly, a Black Caribbean aesthetic works through formal references that both resist and remain in conversation with the project of modernity and a Western account of (art) history.³⁶⁶ The media sculpture *NansiRoachy* embraces such aesthetics, and in its own resistive form will be brought to galleries, block parties, community centres, and school gyms, displaying an adaptability reflective of the everyday ways in which poetics converses with criticality.

The make-do provisional structure and poetics of *NansiRoachy* hold, protect, and project the light and sound waves that reproduce gestural movements and sonic vibrations sustaining Black Jamaicans in the racial-capitalist structures of this place we call Canada. This research-creation project is implicated in Carolyn Cooper's framing of Jamaican and popular culture as "noise" resisting the colonial project through oral, textual, and performative modes.³⁶⁷ My application of this sense of "noise" is mediated through *NansiRoachy*, with the particularities of the assemblage of stories, accents, reggae, bodies and their micromovements, which could only be made in the desire and effort to belong to this place. Christmas celebrations, Sunday services, nine-night celebrations, independence celebrations, picnics, dancehalls, and house parties all exemplify strategies to preserve a feeling of freedom and of home in a cold country. When *NansiRoachy* comes alive as a living archives, the rhythm of sonic vibrations and the visible flickers of frame-by-frame images, along with 16mm film tinted with plant dyes, constitute the sonic and visual "noise"³⁶⁸ that Stanley Griffin reclaims as the Black/Caribbean archive itself. This is, after all, a Jamaican "Canadian" archive. Presentations of these digital, weightless archives have the capacity to take flight into other bodies, migrating and transmitting knowledge prompted by song, dance, and rhythm responding to the "downpression"³⁶⁹ of the Canadian "weather."³⁷⁰

Gong Gong

I began this dissertation by honouring my maternal great-great-grandmother in mentally and emotionally



processing the discovery of her portrait. I conclude this scholarly writing with a narrative honouring my paternal great-great-grandmother. First take a moment to understand that I can trace my genealogy back no further than these two formidable Black women. The photographs of both of these women came into my purview during the research. The image in figure 18 is a digital photo of a photograph of Catherine “Gong Gong” Gayle, whose picture survives because of a great-aunt, now deceased, who lived in Whitby, Ontario. She was the family archivist for my father’s side of the family. I know little about Gong Gong, except that she

Figure 18 Catherine “Gong Gong” Gayle, photograph date unknown. was born free in 1877 and died in 1935, the years etched on her roadside grave, of which I have a cellphone photo. She had children with a light-skinned man and owned her own property. Next to her is a house, presumably hers, with its limestone-and-earth Spanish walls made by the men in her community, her family. The skirt of her dress is caught mid-sway, catching the breeze off the nearby sea. Photographed in surroundings familiar to her, her shoulders are relaxed and her demeanour comfortable, and it appears she knows the photographer. She

lacks the tense, defensive posture apparent in the studio photograph of Grand Mumma. Instead, Gong Gong looks rather happy, likely dressed for church with her hair straightened and a hat in her right hand. She looks modern and stylish with her heel pumps and short-sleeved patterned dress with a bow tie collar. Her purse hangs off her shoulder and is tucked underneath her arm. The most striking feature of this photograph for me is the mischief I see in her eyes, signifiers of a “jokify,”³⁷¹ trickster family. That look is a corporeal record of how to survive and bear poverty and abuse, a record that informs a strategy for living that my father, sisters, and I all continue to perform. Neither dementia nor mental illness has deteriorated that record.

In this research, I illuminate the epistemological importance of photographs, VHS tapes, cassettes, stories, poses, and gestures of the community because participants in the research trusted me to share their knowledge with wider audiences. I think of myself as an artist whose oeuvre consists of constructed platforms by which alchemy amongst people, materials, plants, and living archives coalesces into something weirdly and aesthetically beautiful. This is how nature itself functions in our lives in gardens, forests, soups, and bouquets. Plants enhance our sense of the world, tickling the visual, tactile, gustatory, and olfactory senses. The leaves, flowers, bark, and soil also provide comfort, pleasure, solace, and even bitter medicine. An archive of the Jamaican diaspora includes the whole of our experiences, with all facets of a seen and unseen world preserved as embodied knowledge. When *NansiRoachy* enters a room, they enter as someone from the Jamaican diaspora whose ancestors faced the Door of No Return. History wanders into the room with its mechanical-electronic body. Black fleshy bodies share space with the light and sound waves of ancestors, past and future. Their knowledge is held and protected within the ridiculously large spidery body of *NansiRoachy*, and by the methods of historical preservation retained in a mediated vehicle that supports the simultaneous transmission and reembodiment of the community’s knowledge as living archives.

NOTES

¹ The notion of ideological apparatuses is drawn from Louis Althusser, *On the Reproduction of Capitalism: Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses*, trans. G. M. Goshgarian (London: Verso, 2014).

Chapter 1

² Stuart Hall, “Old and New Identities, Old and New Ethnicities,” in *Essential Essays, Vol. 2: Identity and Diaspora*, ed. David Morley (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 79.

³ Barrington Walker, “Critical Histories of Blackness in Canada,” in *Unsettling the Great White North*, ed. Michele A. Johnson and Funké Aladejebi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 39.

⁴ For a review of the field of epigenetics see Amy Lehrner and Rachel Yehuda, “Cultural Trauma and Epigenetic Inheritance,” *Development and Psychopathology* 30, no. 5 (December 2018): 1763–77. A perspective from the field of social psychology is Resmaa Menakem, *My Grandmother’s Hands: Racialized Trauma and the Pathway to Mending Our Hearts and Bodies* (Las Vegas: Central Recovery Press, 2017).

⁵ I reference Frantz Fanon’s experience and observation of Black Caribbean people in France working endlessly (and perhaps hopelessly) to learn diction in order to assimilate. Frantz Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, trans. Charles Lam Markmann (New York: Grove Press, 1967), 11.

⁶ The Jamaican language has several labels, including Patois, the spelling the majority of people use; Jamaican Creole; Jamaican; and Jamiékan Langwij. I will refer to the language as Patwa, Jamaican, or Jamiékan Langwij throughout. B. L. Bailey, *Jamaican Creole Syntax: A Transformational Approach* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1966); Pauline Christie, ed. *Due Respect: Papers on English and English-Related Creoles on the Caribbean in Honour of Professor Robert Le Page* (Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2001); Pauline Christie et al., eds., *Studies in Caribbean Language II: Papers from the Ninth Biennial Conference of the Society for Caribbean Linguists* (Trinidad: School of Education, University of the West Indies, St. Augustine, 1998); Barbara Lalla and Jean D’Costa, *Language in Exile: Three Hundred Years of Jamaican Creole* (Tuscaloosa: University of Alabama Press, 1990); Hazel Simmons-McDonald and Ian Robertson, eds., *Exploring the Boundaries of Caribbean Creole Languages* (Jamaica; Barbados; Trinidad and Tobago: University of the West Indies Press, 2006).

⁷ Édouard Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, trans. Betsy Wing (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1997), 144.

⁸ *Trick or Treaty?*, directed by Alanis Obomsawin (National Film Board of Canada, 2014).

⁹ Maurice Switzer, *We Are All Treaty People* (North Bay, ON: Union of Ontario Indians, 2013).

¹⁰ “Raggamuffin” stems from the Middle English word referring to someone, often a child, who is unkempt and somewhat haphazard, wearing raggedy clothes. In reggae culture, it is someone with streetstyle or roughnecks. See <https://jamaicanpatwah.com/term/Raggamuffin/1883>.

¹¹ Paul Gilroy, *The Black Atlantic: Modernity and Double Consciousness* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2003); Stuart Hall, “Cultural Identity and Cinematic Representation,” in *Ex-Iles: Essays on Caribbean Cinema*, ed. Mbye B. Cham (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 1992), 220–36; C. L. R. James, *Beyond a Boundary* (New York: Penguin Random House, 1963); Sylvia Wynter, “Rethinking ‘Aesthetics’: Notes Towards a Deciphering Practice,” in Cham, *Ex-Iles*, 237–79.

¹² While I do not claim that performative archives belong hegemonically to Caribbean peoples or Black Atlantic cultures, I do argue that an account of Jamaican history and culture in Canada must include theoretical and methodological approaches to preserving history and culture practiced by the people. Much of this research addresses oral-corporeal traditions and creative practices. See, for instance, Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, “*They Do as They Please*”: *The Jamaican Struggle for Cultural Freedom after Morant Bay* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2011); Peter A. Roberts, *A Response to Enslavement: Playing Their Way to Virtue* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2018); Sonjah Stanley Niaah, *DanceHall: From Slave Ship to Ghetto* (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2012).

¹³ Terry Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms,” *Archival Science* 13, nos. 2–3 (2013): 106.

¹⁴ Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” trans. Eric Prenowitz, *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (Summer 1995): 9–63. For a discussion on the power of the archive in colonial projects, see Tom Rice, *Films for the Colonies: Cinema and the Preservation of the British Empire* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2019); and Jeannette A.

Bastian, Stanley H. Griffin, and John A. Aarons, eds., *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record: An Archives Reader* (Sacramento, CA: Library Juice Press, 2018).

- ¹⁵ Andrea Davis, *Horizon, Sea, Sound: Caribbean and African Women's Cultural Critiques of Nation* (Evanston, IL: Northwestern University Press, 2022), 8.
- ¹⁶ Janine Marchessault, "Amateur Video and the Challenge for Change (1995)," in *Challenge for Change: Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada*, ed. Thomas Waugh, Michael Brendan Baker, and Ezra Winton (Montreal: McGill-Queen's University Press, 2010), 359.
- ¹⁷ See Patricia Rodden Zimmermann, *Reel Families: A Social History of Amateur Film* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1995), 150; Laurie Ouellette, "Technology and Representation: Camcorder Dos and Don'ts: Popular Discourses on Amateur Video and Participatory Television," *Velvet Light Trap* 36 (Fall 1995): 34.
- ¹⁸ I rely on Stuart Hall's analysis of cultural identity formation in diaspora that marks Caribbean identities in *différance*, negotiating between the presence/absence of both Africa and European/colonial power: "The diaspora experience as I intend it here is defined, not by essence or purity, but by the recognition of a necessary heterogeneity and diversity. . . . Diaspora identities are those which are constantly producing and reproducing themselves anew, through transformation and difference," though Africa remains an underlying principle of cultural and ethnic organization. Stuart Hall, "Cultural Identity and Diaspora [1990]," in *Selected Writings on Race and Difference*, ed. Paul Gilroy and Ruth Wilson Gilmore (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2021), 235.
- ¹⁹ Stuart Hall, "'Africa' Is Alive and Well in the Diaspora: Cultures of Resistance: Slavery, Religious Revival and Political Cultism in Jamaica [1975]," in Gilroy and Wilson, *Selected Writings*, 161–94.
- ²⁰ Dionne Brand, *A Map to the Door of No Return: Notes to Belonging* (Toronto: Doubleday Canada, 2001), 6.
- ²¹ My argument is bolstered by a recent article in the *Toronto Star* by Murray Sinclair, chief commissioner of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, who shares this argument and the provocations of the aforementioned existential questions, of the necessity of understanding one's origins to "realize their creation story intersects with mine. Together, we are one beautiful—albeit complicated—story." See Deborah Dundas, "He Led the Truth and Reconciliation Commission. He Wants Canada to Ask Itself These Four Questions," *Toronto Star*, September 30, 2024, https://www.thestar.com/opinion/star-columnists/he-led-the-truth-and-reconciliation-commission-he-wants-canada-to-ask-itself-these-four/article_755fda62-79bf-11ef-9fa5-e38d8c011ad8.html.
- ²² Walter Rodney, *The Groundings with My Brothers* (New York: Verso, 2019).
- ²³ Louise Bennett-Coverley, "'Dutty Tuff"—Part 1," audiocassette, Louise Bennett-Coverley fonds, box 25, file 23, Digital Archive, McMaster University Library, Hamilton, Ontario, accessed November 15, 2024, <https://digitalarchive.mcmaster.ca/islandora/object/macrepo%3A74278>.
- ²⁴ The assertion that stories are archives was further articulated by Indigenous Elder Pauline Shirt and numerous knowledge keepers and cultural producers at the Indigenous Archives Gathering, an Archive/Counter-Archive project. See "The Indigenous Archives Gathering | Oct. 17–18, TIFF Bell Lightbox," Archive/Counter-Archive, accessed October 17, 2024, <https://counterarchive.ca/gathering>.
- ²⁵ Kamau Brathwaite, *The Arrivants: A New World Trilogy* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2000).
- ²⁶ Judith Andrade, interview with the author, September 22, 2023.

Chapter 2

- ²⁷ See, for instance, bibliographies in Kamau Brathwaite, *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica: 1770–1820* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 1971); Roberts, *Response to Enslavement*; Brian L. Moore and Michele A. Johnson, *Neither Led nor Driven: Contesting British Cultural Imperialism in Jamaica, 1865–1920* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2004). A specific example is that of the enslaver Thomas Thistlewood, where a collection of his diaries, weather journals, notes, and other papers are beautifully preserved at the Yale University Archives. The dry, distanced archival description belies the horrifying but important information preserved from this perspective:

Series I, Diaries, consists of 37 diaries containing daily entries dating between 1750 and 1786. Topics include Thistlewood's work as an overseer, and later owner, of slaves, including his methods of assigning work, allotting provisions, and discipline; his personal and sexual relationships with several slaves, including his lengthy relationship with Phibbah, his slave "wife"; and slave rebellions and rumors of rebellions, particularly Tacky's Revolt (1760). Other topics include personal and professional relationships with white Jamaicans, including his first employer, John Cope, and his family; purchases and expenses; meals and other entertainments; and recreational activities. The diary for 1763 is bound with a manuscript

treatise on planting, by Mr. John Palley Edwards. There is one diary by Thistlewood's nephew, John Thistlewood (d. 1768). (<https://beinecke.library.yale.edu/collections/highlights/thomas-thistlewood-papers>)

- ²⁸ Cedric J. Robinson, *Black Marxism, Revised and Updated Third Edition: The Making of the Black Radical Tradition* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 2021).
- ²⁹ See Zimmermann, *Reel Families*, 150. René Houle, in a Statistics Canada governmental report, notes the predominance of Black women immigrating to Canada since the 1960 as domestic workers, later nurses, and eventually broader types of employees. The report also notes a persistent economic disadvantage compared to other ethnic groups in Canada. *Changes in the Socioeconomic Situation of Canada's Black Population, 2001 to 2016*, Statistics Canada, August 13, 2020, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-657-x/89-657-x2020001-eng.htm>. A 2007 report notes that Jamaicans in Canada (first and second generation) earned less, that Jamaican women earned even less, and that Jamaican men, women, and youth reported higher levels of unemployment compared to the overall population. *The Jamaican Community in Canada*, Statistics Canada, 2007, <https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/89-621-x/89-621-x2007012-eng.htm>. While more research is warranted in terms of the degree of access households had to analogue media production equipment in the late-twentieth century, one can deduce there was less disposable income overall among Black households to purchase film or video cameras.
- ³⁰ Collection F0723—Home Made Visible Collection, accessed January 27, 2025, <https://atom.library.yorku.ca/index.php/home-made-visible-collection>. The CTASC has acquired somewhat of a specialization in community archives due to doctoral research projects, including examples in Hellenic, Egyptian, and Italian archives. Some VHS tapes of Black Caribbean culture, such as sound clashes and carnival, are found within the collections but are not organized according to the community.
- ³¹ Generally speaking, “sound clash” refers to mobile DJing systems called “sounds” competing with each other through lyrics and the DJ’s own words over the music (toasting). For a fulsome analysis of sound clashes see Sonjah N. Stanley Niaah, “‘Sounding’ Out the System: Noise, In/Security and the Politics of Citizenship,” in *Dancehall In/Securities: Perspectives on Caribbean Expressive Life*, ed. Patricia Noxolo, ‘H’ Patten, and Sonjah Stanley Niaah (New York: Routledge, 2022), 143. The CTASC houses the Kenneth Shah fonds with Caribbean materials, and some VHS tapes of sound clashes in Toronto. In terms of Caribbean archives at the Archives of Ontario, the Claire Prieto and Roger McTair fonds represents an important collection of films of Black lives in Ontario.
- ³² “Tech bro” is a colloquial term defined in the *Cambridge Dictionary* as “someone, usually a man, who works in the digital technology industry, especially in the United States, and is sometimes thought to not have good social skills and to be too confident about their own ability.” *Cambridge Dictionary*, “tech bro,” accessed May 29, 2025, <https://dictionary.cambridge.org/dictionary/english/tech-bro>. In the mid-2020s, the term is being increasingly aligned with power.
- ³³ I refer to the importance of this dual process of digitizing material records and materializing digital records from the findings through my archival art practice in the series *Elemental Traces 2019–2020*, for which I printed the remnants of digital records recovered from floppy disks of my father’s work of the 1980s, much of which was lost. This series involved handmade paper from cotton and abaca (banana leaf fibre), archival paper, and wax-based inks on a Xerox machine to create printed records, none of which would have survived without this process.
- ³⁴ The change in Canadian immigration policy was due to the elimination of racial preference in the 1962 Immigration Act during the Diefenbaker government, in favour of a points system created in 1967. Barrington Walker, “Jamaicans and the Making of Modern Canada,” in *Jamaica in the Canadian Experience: A Multiculturalizing Presence*, ed. Carl E. James and Andrea Davis (Halifax: Fernwood, 2012), 32.
- ³⁵ See Mark V. Campbell, *Afrosonic Life* (New York: Bloomsbury Academic, 2022), 81.
- ³⁶ I reference here Brathwaite, *Arrivants*.
- ³⁷ It is important to note that affordability is questionable in marginalized communities that must contend with the economic effects of structural and systemic racism. What this research hopes to do is understand the range of materials, including audiovisual records, that were deemed important enough to keep in the Jamaican communities I am researching.
- ³⁸ There remains hope for the establishment of a museum that the Ontario Black History Society continues to work on.
- ³⁹ Black Canadian Deanna Bowen’s substantial artistic oeuvre excavates institutional archives relating to her family in the Prairies and specific localities and interrogates how the networks of White artists and patrons serve to promote anti-Black and anti-Indigenous racism. Nadine Valcin is a documentary filmmaker whose most recent film, *Simply Johanne* (2024), activates film archives to tell the story of Johanne Harrelle, a magnetic Black Québécoise model and actor. Camille Turner is a Black Jamaican artist who recovers Black archives in intuitions through the *Afronautic Research Lab* to investigate suppressed archives of slavery and anti-Black racism.

- ⁴⁰ The CTASC is the repository for three important community archives connected to ethnic communities: the HHF Greek Canadian Archives, the Portuguese Canadian History Project, and the Egypt Migrations project, which all serve as models for this doctoral research-creation project.
- ⁴¹ Rastafarian etymological interventions create words that invert or clarify the meaning of English terms as a resistive gesture towards the oppressive regime. Similar to the Rastafarian term “overstand” instead of “understand,” I have used the neologism “undersight” instead of “oversight” to reflect the meaning or “truth” of what an archival gap is—a lack rather than an abundance of attention that causes such lacunas. For more on what is known as “Dread Talk,” see Barry Chevannes, *Rastafari: Roots and Ideology* (Syracuse, NY: Syracuse University Press, 1994); and Velma Pollard, *Dread Talk: The Language of Rastafari* (Montreal: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2000).
- ⁴² Andrew Flinn, “Community Histories, Community Archives: Some Opportunities and Challenges,” *Journal of the Society of Archivists* 28, no. 2 (October 2007): 152. Flinn acknowledges the fluidity of identities that refer to a “community.”
- ⁴³ Shaunasea Elaine Brown, “Art Routes: Locating Second-Generation Black Caribbean Canadian Women’s Perspectives” (PhD diss., York University, 2022), 159, <http://hdl.handle.net/10315/40804>.
- ⁴⁴ For a discussion on Jamaican women’s sense of belonging in Canada, see Andrea A. Davis, “Un/belonging in Diasporic Cities: A Literary History of First-Generation Caribbean Women in London and Toronto,” *Caribbean Review of Gender Studies*, no. 13 (June 2019): 34.
- ⁴⁵ Michelle Caswell et al., “‘To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise’: Community Archives and the Importance of Representation,” *Archives and Records* 38, no. 1 (2016): 5–26.
- ⁴⁶ Laura Millar, “Discharging Our Debt: The Evolution of the Total Archives Concept in English Canada,” *Archivaria* 46 (Fall 1998): 103–46. “Total archives” refers both to the hierarchical structure of recordkeeping at the national and provincial scales and to the concept of keeping all records, including media and digital ones. Millar describes how the conceptual framework is shifting from total archives to an archival system whereby records are kept closer to where they are found, for example, in community archives (104). See also Terry Cook, “Macroappraisal in Theory and Practice: Origins, Characteristics, and Implementation in Canada, 1950–2000,” *Archival Science* 5, nos. 2–4, (December 2005): 101–61; Terry Cook and Joan M. Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance,” *Archival Science* 2, nos. 3–4, (September 2002): 171–85. “Macroappraisal” is linked to the total archives concept in terms of defining societal value and thus what is worthy of preservation in national and provincial institutions. Cook refers to macroappraisal as the “Canadian way of doing things,” in which records are assessed according to long-term “societal value” (“Macroappraisal,” 101). The practice and theory are therefore subject to the power structures, biases, and prejudices of the archivists and society in question.
- ⁴⁷ By “perpetual immigrant” I mean the ways in which racialized peoples are constantly asked where they are from, as if they could not be from Canada. It is this problematic of “recent arrival” that evokes Barrington Walker’s article on the long historical presence of Jamaicans in Canada. Walker, “Jamaicans in the Making of Modern Canada,” 23.
- ⁴⁸ James and Davis, introduction to *Jamaica in the Canadian Experience*, 11.
- ⁴⁹ Here I refer to fugitive ads in archival collections across Canada which artists Camille Turner and Deanna Bowen address in their work. See, for instance, the exhibition *Deanna Bowen: Black Drones in the Hive*, Kitchener-Waterloo Art Gallery, curated by Crystal Mowry, September 18, 2020–May 23, 2021, <https://kwag.ca/exhibitions/deanna-bowen-black-drones-hive>; and Camille Turner and Camal Pirbhai, *Wanted: Re-imagining the Enslaved: Eighteenth-Century Freedom Seekers as Twenty-First Century Sitters* (Toronto; Fredericton, NB: Art Gallery of Ontario; Goose Lane Editions, 2017).
- ⁵⁰ The Archives of Ontario does, however, have an important counternarrative of Black Caribbean Canadian life within its collection, largely because these are instances of self-representation in film by filmmaker Claire Prieto. Born in Trinidad, Prieto, one of the first Black filmmakers in Canada, produced and directed the documentaries *Some Black Women* (1975, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1b9UfSXzv-g>) and *Different Timbres* (1980, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Su35kRo5sDo>), both depicting diasporic Caribbean lives. These films are in the collection of the Archives of Ontario and available on their highly accessible YouTube channel. The Alvin McCurdy Collection also features Black subjectivities in photographic representations from Black communities.
- ⁵¹ See, for instance, Walker, “Jamaicans in the Making of Modern Canada,” 23–34.
- ⁵² For an in-depth look at a nationwide project engaging community archives and media artists, see Archive/Counter-Archive: <https://counterarchive.ca>. An example of how Archive/Counter-Archive is reshaping archival discourse in Canada is the Indigenous Archives Gathering, which was organized, conceptualized, and executed by Indigenous scholars and artists. My colleague from Odeimin Runners, Adrian Kahgee, for instance, spoke about how the body is a living archive—“the archive is literally in our DNA.” This perspective was iterated a number of times by Elder Pauline

Shirt and echoed by numerous panelists. “The Indigenous Archives Gathering | Oct. 17–18, TIFF Bell Lightbox,” Archive/Counter-Archive, accessed October 17, 2024, <https://counterarchive.ca/gathering>.

⁵³ South Side Home Movies is an American audiovisual preservation project specific to a Black community in Chicago. Home movies are regarded as sites of cultural heritage and valued as archives. It is useful to think about this project in relation to how audiovisual preservation and community engagement mutually support each other. See <https://sshmportal.uchicago.edu/index.php/About/Index>.

⁵⁴ For Mark V. Campbell’s North Side Hip Hop Archive, see <https://www.nshharchive.ca>; and on the *Rhythms and Resistance* exhibition, see “Rhythms and Resistance: Celebrating Toronto’s Powerful Caribbean Music Legacy,” Reggae North, February 17, 2022, <https://reggaenorthca.com/rhythms-and-resistance-celebrating-torontos-powerful-caribbean-music-legacy/>. Important community archives examples can be found in the UK, in which there are three Black community archives largely covering the Caribbean diaspora context. H. J. M. Ishmael writes about how community archives in the UK developed as a necessity to address the “historical legacies of enslavement, colonialism and racism” (723) and to counter “the presumption of whiteness of British Domestic history” (728). Black Caribbean archives in the UK “negotiate the traumas and legacies of enslavement and colonialism, and [serve] as an important tool of recognition of this trauma and its legacies and [work for] healing” (724–25). Ishmael also points to the epistemic and emotional violence of the absences in and consequent marginalization of the records; importantly, this compounds the content of the archival records of the British state’s physical violence on Afro-Caribbean people through enslavement and policing and racist policies (728) as well as the community archives’ desire to produce a counterhistory that is positive and celebratory (734). He speaks to the restoration of a sense of self. Since the Canadian archival context is modeled on the British paradigm and shares colonial legacies, the problematics in the UK translate to the Canadian context. H. J. M. Ishmael, “‘Is we speak to we now’: The Making of Caribbean Archives in London,” in Bastian, Griffin, and Aarons, *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record*, 723–46.

⁵⁵ Barbara Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society, 1650–1838* (Kingston, Jamaica: Heinemann Caribbean, 1990), 17.

⁵⁶ I am grateful to Katrina Keefer, adjunct professor of history at Trent University, for the identification of these scars as atrophic. Katrina Keefer, discussion with the author, January 30, 2025.

⁵⁷ For the most part, I have ruled out the possibility of a surgical scar, though early thyroid surgery included using boiling water and hot irons. See, for instance, Bertil Hamberger, “History of Thyroid Surgery: The Kocher Incision,” in *Minimally Invasive Thyroidectomy*, ed. Dimitrios Linos and Woong Youn Chung (Berlin: Springer, 2012), 1–5. By 1909 these methods were abandoned for the much safer incisions, which Peter Kopp, professor of medicine in the Division of Endocrinology, Diabetology and Metabolism at the University of Lausanne, Switzerland, corroborated in an email message to author: “Looking at this scar and also taking into account the scars in the face, it is my impression that this may be not related to thyroid surgery.” While Kopp admits that one can only guess the nature of the scar, he does suggest it was most likely due to a burn or perhaps an infectious disease. Furthermore, he writes:

It is also important to note that endemic goiter due to iodine deficiency (historically the most important cause of goiter) has not been a problem in Jamaica.

Although there are other diseases than can lead to goiter development, in particular hyperthyroidism due to Graves’ disease, there are no other clinical features that would suggest the presence of Graves’ disease (protruding eyes) or hypothyroidism in your great-great-grandmother.

The discoverer of antithyroid drugs (thionamides) was a Caribbean physician from Bermuda, Ted Astwood. Astwood was an outstanding scientist and an independent thinker with a very strong ethical compass.

Having lived experience with people with extensive burn scars, I have some practical expertise in identifying these types of scars. Because of the concentrated area of the scar I am curious about the cause and whether it could have been a random accident (fire or boiling water, for instance), or whether the injury was inflicted by someone else. The scar points to a future research that would involve a deeper forensic analysis of this photograph, and if my hypothesis is correct, a sociological-historical analysis as well.

⁵⁸ Olubimpe A. Ayeni et al., “Observations on the Procedural Aspects and Health Effects of Scarification in Sub-Saharan Africa,” *Journal of Cutaneous Medicine and Surgery* 11, no. 6 (November 2007): 217–21.

⁵⁹ For historical research on gendered punishment during slavery, see Marisa J. Fuentes, *Dispossessed Lives: Enslaved Women, Violence, and the Archive* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2016); Katrina H. B. Keefer and Matthew S. Hopper, “Following the Trail of the Slave Trade: Branding, Skin, and Commodification,” in *Stigma: Marking Skin in the Early Modern World*, ed. Katherine Dauge-Roth and Craig Koslofsky (University Park, PA:

- Penn State University Press, 2023), 58–82; and Dawn P. Harris, *Punishing the Black Body: Marking Social and Racial Structures in Barbados and Jamaica* (Athens: University of Georgia Press, 2017).
- ⁶⁰ Ayeni et al., “Scarification in Sub-Saharan Africa,” 218; Paul E. Lovejoy, “Scarification and the Loss of History in the African Diaspora,” in *Slavery in the Global Diaspora of Africa* (New York: Routledge, 2019), 232.
- ⁶¹ Lovejoy, “Scarification,” 221, 234, 227, 224.
- ⁶² Monica Schuler, “Review of Jamaica and Voluntary Laborers from Africa, 1840–1865,” *International Journal of African Historical Studies* 8, no. 3 (1975): 523–28.
- ⁶³ For an account of the kumina religious practice, see Olive Lewin, *Rock It Come Over: The Folk Music of Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2000), 215; and Maureen Warner-Lewis, *Central Africa in the Caribbean: Transcending Time, Transforming Cultures* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2003).
- ⁶⁴ Saidiya Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” *Small Axe* 12, no. 2 (June 2008): 11–12.
- ⁶⁵ Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, 13–15.
- ⁶⁶ See Harris, *Punishing the Black Body*; Moore and Johnson, *Neither Led Nor Driven*; Verene A. Shepherd’s summary of modern-day legacies of slavery, delivered in a 2001 lecture at York University, “‘Up From Slavery’: The Legacy of Slavery and the Project of Emancipation in the Commonwealth Caribbean, 2001,” in *I Want To Disturb My Neighbor: Lectures on Slavery, Emancipation and Postcolonial Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2007).
- ⁶⁷ Amy Lehrner and Rachel Yehuda, “Cultural Trauma and Epigenetic Inheritance,” *Development and Psychopathology* 30, no. 5 (December 2018): 1763–77; Henrietta Byrne and Jaya Keaney, “Small Chemicals of Trauma: Epigenetics as Colonial Unknowing,” *Science, Technology & Human Values* (October 2024): 1–24.
- ⁶⁸ The Feminist Art Residency is a respite for BIPOC and LGBTQ2+ artists run by Deirdre Logue, artist/filmmaker, arts worker; and Allyson Mitchell, artist, scholar.
- ⁶⁹ For a discussion of haptic cinema see Laura U. Marks, *The Skin of the Film: Intercultural Cinema, Embodiment, and the Senses* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000), 170–76.
- ⁷⁰ I use the downward slash as a nuanced way to include both those who identify as Black Caribbean and those who do not identify as Black but Caribbean in relation to Blackness.
- ⁷¹ Tonia Sutherland and Zakiya Collier, “Introduction: The Revolutionary and Radical in Black Archival Practice,” *Black Scholar* 52, no. 4 (2022): 1–4.
- ⁷² Davis, *Horizon, Sea, Sound*.
- ⁷³ Two foundational texts catalyzed the field of critical archival theory: Michel Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, trans. A. M. S. Smith (New York: Routledge, 2013); and Jacques Derrida, “Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression,” trans. Eric Prenowitz, *Diacritics* 25, no. 2 (1995): 9–63. Foucault construed the archive as the site of epistemological hierarchies that narrates the power of the nation-state into being, and first noted the gaps in the archive by interrogating the formation of knowledge (29, 134, 147). Derrida introduced psychoanalysis to deconstruct the scribal and imperial class hegemony of archives, opening up a space for artistic interventions in a kind of “archive fever” (14).
- ⁷⁴ Brathwaite, *Development of Creole Society*, 297. Brathwaite defines creolization as a process of acculturation within the context of a racially stratified Creole society in which White domination and enslaved Black people under the plantation system influenced each other and were also marked by exogenous factors. See also Davis, *Horizon, Sea, Sound*, 82.
- ⁷⁵ O. Nigel Bollund, “Creolisation and Creole Societies: A Cultural Nationalist View of Caribbean Social History,” in *Questioning Creole: Creolisation Discourses in Caribbean Culture: In Honour of Kamau Brathwaite*, ed. Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle; James Currey, 2002), 34. See also Warner-Lewis, *Central Africa in the Caribbean*, 249, for instance, on Afro-Creole food.
- ⁷⁶ Richard D. E. Burton, *Afro-Creole: Power, Opposition, and Play in the Caribbean* (Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Press, 1997), 1.
- ⁷⁷ Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, 7. See also chapter 2’s discussion of European images of Black women. Antonio Benítez-Rojo, for instance, maintains the view that Black enslaved peoples were too oppressed to develop a new culture through creolization with White enslavers. Antonio Benítez-Rojo, *The Repeating Island: The Caribbean and the Postmodern Perspective* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1996), 71.
- ⁷⁸ Diane Austin-Broos, “Jamaica, the Caribbean, Africa: Some Oppositions and Their Politics,” in *The African-Caribbean Worldview and the Making of Caribbean Society*, ed. Horace Levy (Kingston, Jamaica: University of West Indies Press, 2009), 22. See also Mervyn C. Alleyne, *Roots of Jamaican Culture* (London: Pluto Press, 1988).

- ⁷⁹ Moore and Johnson, “*They Do as They Please*,” 210–347; John R. Rickford and Angela E. Rickford, “Cut-Eye and Suck-Teeth: African Words and Gestures in New World Guise,” *Journal of American Folklore* 89, no. 353 (July 1976): 294. The authors note gestures specific to the Black diaspora.
- ⁸⁰ Benítez-Rojo, *Repeating Island*, 79; Roberts, *Response to Enslavement*, 14, 177. Roberts attributes African retention and creolization to resistive practice, correlating the young ages of the enslaved with cultural loss as a contributor to the development of new practices through play, but, I would argue, with similar embodied methodologies of historical retention.
- ⁸¹ Antonio Benítez-Rojo, “Three Words Toward Creolization,” in *The Birth of Caribbean Civilisation: A Century of Ideas about Culture and Identity, Nation and Society*, ed. O. Nigel Bolland (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle, 2004), 165. See also Benítez-Rojo, *Repeating Island*, 18.
- ⁸² Diana Taylor, *The Archive and the Repertoire: Performing Cultural Memory in the Americas* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003).
- ⁸³ The spelling was developed by Di Jamiekan Langwij Yoonit (Jamaican Language Unit) at the University of West Indies Mona and used in Michele A. Johnson, ed., *Louise Bennett and Jamiekan Langwij: Commemorations and Critical Perspectives* (Trenton, NJ: Africa World Press, 2023).
- ⁸⁴ Carolyn Cooper, *Noises in the Blood: Orality, Gender, and the “Vulgar” Body of Jamaican Popular Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1995), 2–3.
- ⁸⁵ Emily Zobel Marshall, *Anansi’s Journey: A Story of Jamaican Cultural Resistance* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2012), 155. I adopt the spelling and linguistic position of Johnson’s edited volume *Louise Bennett and Jamiekan Langwij* to recognize what is known as Patois or Patwa as a bona fide language.
- ⁸⁶ Carol Bailey, *A Poetics of Performance: The Oral-Scribal Aesthetic in Anglophone Caribbean Fiction* (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2014), 180.
- ⁸⁷ Bailey, *Poetics of Performance*, 3.
- ⁸⁸ Bailey, *Poetics of Performance*, 4.
- ⁸⁹ Cornel Bogle and Michael A. Bucknor, “Imagining the [Unbounded] Grounds of [Caribbean Canadian] Consciousness,” *Canada and Beyond: A Journal of Canadian Literary and Cultural Studies* 10 (2021): 11–50.
- ⁹⁰ Sharon Beckford, “Taking a Piece of the Past With Us,” in James and Davis, *Jamaica in the Canadian Experience*, 84–96.
- ⁹¹ Stuart Hall, “Constituting an Archive,” *Third Text* 15, no. 54 (March 2001): 91–92.
- ⁹² James C. Scott, *Domination and the Arts of Resistance: Hidden Transcripts* (New Haven, CT: Yale University Press, 2008), 4–5.
- ⁹³ Olive Lewin, *Rock It Come over: The Folk Music of Jamaica* (Kingston, Jamaica: Univ. of the West Indies Press, 2000), 12–21.
- ⁹⁴ Fela Sowande, “The Quest of an African Worldview: The Utilization of African discourse,” in *Black Communication: Dimensions of Research and Instruction* (New York: Speech Communication Association, n.d.), 67–117. Quoted in Lewin, *Rock It Come Over*, 56.
- ⁹⁵ Lewin *Rock It Come Over*, 56.
- ⁹⁶ Lewin *Rock It Come Over*, 56.
- ⁹⁷ Lewin *Rock It Come Over*, 202–3. I acknowledge Michele A. Johnson for the insight into how the choice to perform folk with a Euro-British influence grew out of her training in the UK and the respectability politics that positioned folk in a way palatable to a burgeoning middle class keen to take on the roles formerly held by UK civil servants and businesses. Rex Nettleford’s interpretations in dance similarly walked between these two aesthetic languages and occurred within wider artistic geographies, including Black American performing artists such as Katherine Dunham and Alvin Ailey, who both straddled folk with European dance aesthetics. In Rastafarianism, the doctrine is expressed in songs (205), movement, and music as therapy (207).
- ⁹⁸ Cooper, *Noises in the Blood*, 8.
- ⁹⁹ Cooper, *Noises in the Blood*, 4.
- ¹⁰⁰ See, for instance, Flinn, “Community Histories”; and Randall C. Jimerson, “Embracing the Power of Archives,” *American Archivist* 69, no. 1 (2006): 19–32.
- ¹⁰¹ Cooper, *Noises in the Blood*, 4.
- ¹⁰² Peter Manuel and Wayne Marshall, “The Riddim Method,” in *Dancehall: A Reader on Jamaican Music and Culture*, ed. Sonjah Stanley Niaah (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2020), 283.
- ¹⁰³ Sonjah Stanley Niaah, “Ritual and Community in Dancehall Performance,” in Niaah, *Dancehall: A Reader*, 327–41; and Kate Lawton, “Representation of ‘Obeah’ and ‘Bad-Mind’ in Contemporary Jamaican Dancehall,” in Niaah,

- Dancehall: A Reader*, 342–56. See also Latonya Style’s YouTube channel archiving dancehall choreographies: <https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC00SYh5pxoC-oAAmsytCNhQ> (accessed November 15, 2024).
- ¹⁰⁴ Naila Keleta-Mae, “I remember,” in Johnson, *Louise Bennett and Jamiekan Langwij*, 115–18; and Andrea A. Davis, “‘From Jamaica to Canada,’ Miss Lou and the Poetics of Migration,” in Johnson, 63–82.
- ¹⁰⁵ Mark V. Campbell, “The Gwannings,” in James and Davis, *Jamaica in the Canadian Experience*, 120–28; “‘Waa Gwaan?’: The Construction of Black Language and Identity in Toronto,” in James and Davis, 205–25; and Michele A. Johnson “‘Saying Dis, Dat, and Toder’: Creating a Jamaican Language (Jamiekan Langwij) in the Eighteenth and Nineteenth Centuries,” in Johnson, *Louise Bennett and Jamiekan Langwij*, 93–119.
- ¹⁰⁶ See “What Are Archives?,” Association of Canadian Archivists, accessed January 23, 2025, <https://archivists.ca/What-Are-Archives>. See also the usage of the term in Terry Cook, “From Information to Knowledge: An Intellectual Paradigm for Archives,” *Archivaria* 19 (Winter 1984/1985): 28–49.
- ¹⁰⁷ Informal conversations on the definition and use of the term “archives” with librarians and archivists at conferences are echoed in Marlene Manoff, “Theories of the Archive from Across the Disciplines,” *Portal: Libraries and the Academy* 4, no. 1 (2004): 9–25. In fact, Stuart Hall’s inclusion of the subjectivity of the creator of the archival record expands the boundary of the archive.
- ¹⁰⁸ Derrida, “Archive Fever,” 90. The influence of poststructuralists Derrida and Foucault in the field of visual studies, including artmaking, curating, and writing, cannot be overstated, as evidenced in the seminal 2008 exhibition curated by the late Okwui Enwezor, *Archive Fever: Uses of the Document in Contemporary Art*, and the proliferation of artists working with/creating archives in this contemporary moment.
- ¹⁰⁹ For discussions on community archives, see, for instance, Caswell et al., “To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise,” 6; and Flinn, “Community Histories,” 153.
- ¹¹⁰ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 119.
- ¹¹¹ Jeannette A. Bastian, Stanley H. Griffin, and John A. Aarons, introduction to *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record*, 2.
- ¹¹² See, for instance, Stanley Griffin’s rationale for the valuation/validation of the oral record vis-à-vis official archives, in Stanley Griffin, “‘Putting Up Ah Resistance’: Rastafari Records, Struggles and Triumphs,” in Bastian, Griffin, and Aarons, *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record*, 482.
- ¹¹³ Bastian, Griffin, and Aarons, *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record*, 3.
- ¹¹⁴ Roberts, *Response to Enslavement*, 131.
- ¹¹⁵ Roberts, *Response to Enslavement*, 316.
- ¹¹⁶ Moore, and Johnson, “*They Do as They Please*,” 81.
- ¹¹⁷ I think with Andrea Davis’s trope of sound here and elaborate on the implications in the section on Black feminism.
- ¹¹⁸ Katherine McKittrick, *Demonic Grounds: Black Women and the Cartographies of Struggle* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2006), xvii–xix.
- ¹¹⁹ Caswell et al., “To Be Able to Imagine Otherwise.”
- ¹²⁰ On the Black Cultural Archives, see <https://blackculturalarchives.org/our-story>.
- ¹²¹ See the discussion on changes and tensions in archival paradigms in Terry Cook, “Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms,” *Archival Science* 13, nos. 2–3 (June 2013): 95–120; and Michelle Caswell, “Teaching to Dismantle White Supremacy in Archives,” *Library Quarterly* 87, no. 3 (July 2017): 222–35.
- ¹²² Michelle Caswell, *Urgent Archives: Enacting Liberatory Memory Work* (London: Routledge, 2021), 7.
- ¹²³ T-Kay Sangwand, “Preservation Is Political: Enacting Contributive Justice and Decolonizing Transnational Archival Collaborations,” *KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies* 2 (November 29, 2018): 10.
- ¹²⁴ Caswell, *Urgent Archives*, 87.
- ¹²⁵ Mason A. Jones, “Selective Memory: Assessing Conventions of Memory in the Archival Literature,” *Journal of Contemporary Archival Studies* 9 (2022): 1–11.
- ¹²⁶ Laura Millar, “Touchstones: Considering the Relationship between Memory and Archives,” *Archiveria* 61 (Spring 2006): 113.
- ¹²⁷ Millar, “Touchstones,” 119.
- ¹²⁸ Caswell, “Teaching to Dismantle.”
- ¹²⁹ Dallas Hunt, “Nikikiwan: Contesting Settler Colonial Archives through Indigenous Oral History,” *Canadian Literature*, nos. 230–231 (September 2016), <http://go.gale.com/ps/i.do?p=AONE&sw=w&issn=00084360&v=2.1&it=r&id=GALE%7CA510652404&sid=googleScholar&linkaccess=abs>.
- ¹³⁰ Joseph Pugliese, “Embodied Archives,” *Journal of the Association for the Study of Australian Literature* 11, no. 1 (2011): 5. Emphasis mine.

- ¹³¹ Pugliese, “Embodied Archives,” 2.
- ¹³² Paola Zaccaria, “(Trans)MediterrAtlantic Embodied Archives,” *JOMEC Journal*, no. 8 (November 2015): 9.
- ¹³³ Zaccaria, “(Trans)MediterrAtlantic Embodied Archives,” 10, 14.
- ¹³⁴ Together with Rebeka Tabobondung, Adrian and I comprise the Odeimin Runners, an Indigenous, Black/POC media art collective. Importantly, in my work in Saugeen First Nation, I recognized—and began to value in a different way—the “shadow” and “embodied” archive in my own culture.
- ¹³⁵ Jeannette A. Bastian, “‘Play mas’: Carnival in the Archives and the Archives in Carnival, Records and Community Identity in the United States Virgin Islands,” in Bastian, Griffin, and Aarons, *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record*, 507.
- ¹³⁶ See Stanley Griffin’s presentation on the panel “The Michael Baptista Lecture Series 2022–23: Archival Justice and Digital Collaborative Scholarship,” posted December 1, 2022, by Cerlac York University, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=rJPKEVXel-0>.
- ¹³⁷ Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 26.
- ¹³⁸ Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 28.
- ¹³⁹ Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 19, 24. Taylor resolves this apparent contradiction by acknowledging the varied interpretations of the repertoire by individual bodies and over time. Nevertheless, the framing of the repertoire indicates an origin or original of some sort. How close the movement is to its original cannot (yet) be determined.
- ¹⁴⁰ Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 200.
- ¹⁴¹ See, for instance, Ezequiel Adamovsky, “La Africana: canciones de una comparsa de falsos negros del carnaval porteño (1869–1879),” *Corpus. Archivos virtuales de la alteridad americana*, 11, no. 2 (December 14, 2021): 1–48.
- ¹⁴² For a critical discussion on whiteface, see Faedra C. Carpenter, *Coloring Whiteness: Acts of Critique in Black Performance* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 2014). Carpenter argues that whiteface distinguishes itself in terms of how power translates through the performance: “It is often the *idea* of whiteness as a social construct that is ‘put on trial’ with the use of whiteface—a far different dynamic than the historic renditions of white blackface minstrels who mocked, parodied, and questioned black intellect and humanity” (12). See also Mary Elena Wilhoit, “Performing Race and Gender in the Andes,” *ReVista*, January 10, 2017, <https://revista.dreclas.harvard.edu/performing-race-and-gender-in-the-andes/>; Malini Johar Schueller, “Performing Whiteness, Performing Blackness: Dorr’s Cultural Capital and the Critique of Slavery,” *Criticism* 41, no. 2 (1999): 233–56.
- ¹⁴³ While the masquerade was often performed at Christmastime, its form and meaning changed over time. See Sylvia Wynter, “Jonkonnu in Jamaica,” *Jamaica Journal* 4, no. 2 (June 1970): 34–48; Judith Bettelheim, “The Jonkonnu Festival in Jamaica,” *Journal of Ethnic Studies* 13, no. 3 (Fall 1985): 85–105.
- ¹⁴⁴ André Lepecki, “The Body as Archive: Will to Re-enact and the Afterlives of Dances,” *Dance Research Journal* 42, no. 2 (2010): 28–48.
- ¹⁴⁵ I extend Lepecki’s conceptualization of the archive to include everyday choreographies—movements, gestures, storytelling, theatre, dance, and other kinds of play—as portable artifacts of the Jamaican diaspora, a necessary methodology to preserve memory instigated by the “will archive,” recognizing the body as an instrument of agency to overcome subjugation and avoid passive re(en)actions to colonial archives.
- ¹⁴⁶ Referring to Rihanna whining, Persadie claims that “contained within the flow and fluidity of the waistline is an embodied archive of Caribbean feminist resistance and struggle that moves through temporalities of the then and now to speak anti-colonialist/anti-imperialist feminist activism and agitation through the body.” Ryan Persadie, “Sounding the ‘6ix’: Drake, Cultural Appropriation, and Embodied Caribbeanization,” *MUSICultures* 46, no. 1 (August 2019): 66.
- ¹⁴⁷ That is, a shadow archive is created.
- ¹⁴⁸ For example, while Drake uses “dancehall rhythms to create a mediated and diasporic performance which merges multiple modes of blackness . . . to perform a soundscape of intra-racial intimacies and effectively sound the multicultural and Caribbean-influenced cultural fabric of [Toronto], he betrays his non-Caribbeanness because he can neither speak nor move authentically as a Caribbean.” Persadie, “Sounding the ‘6ix,’” 58. Toronto English is another example with Jamaican vocabulary, grammar, and syntax, expressed in young people’s adoption of spoken word as an artistic practice. See Campbell, “Gwannings.”
- ¹⁴⁹ Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*, 78.
- ¹⁵⁰ Pugliese, “Embodied Archives,” 4.
- ¹⁵¹ Moore and Johnson, “*They Do as They Please*.”
- ¹⁵² Yvonne Daniel, “Rhythmic Remembrances,” in *Rhythms of the Afro-Atlantic World*, ed. Mamadou Diouf and Ifeoma Kiddoe Nwankwo (Ann Arbor: University Of Michigan Press, 2010), 81.

- ¹⁵³ Daniel, “Rhythmic Remembrances,” 82.
- ¹⁵⁴ Hall, “‘Africa’ Is Alive and Well,” 172.
- ¹⁵⁵ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*, 134.
- ¹⁵⁶ Hall, “Constituting an Archive,” 91.
- ¹⁵⁷ Hall, “‘Africa’ Is Alive and Well,” 174.
- ¹⁵⁸ Pugliese, “Embodied Archives,” 5.
- ¹⁵⁹ Amalia G. Sabiescu, “Living Archives and the Social Transmission of Memory,” *Curator: The Museum Journal* 63, no. 4 (2020): 497–510.
- ¹⁶⁰ Osthoff describes a generative dynamic between the archive and performance. Simone Osthoff, *Performing the Archive: The Transformation of the Archive in Contemporary Art from Repository of Documents to Art Medium* (New York: Atropos, 2009), 11–12. For further discussion of the dynamic and tensions between the archives and performance, see Gunhild Borggreen and Rune Gade, introduction to *Performing Archives/Archives of Performance* (Copenhagen: Museum Tusulanum, 2013).
- ¹⁶¹ Roshini Kempadoo, *Creole in the Archive: Imagery, Presence and the Location of the Caribbean Figure* (London: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 5–6.
- ¹⁶² Hartman, “Venus in Two Acts,” 11–12. Critical fabulation distends time to fill in the gaps of the past with critical, creative imaginings to explain the afterlife of slavery now and how we might work against it to imagine and actualize alternate futures. In such fabulation, the past, present, and future meet in contemporaneous time, thereby requiring modernist notions of linear historical retelling to yield to more flexible notions of time, events, and affect.
- ¹⁶³ See, for instance, Griffin, “Putting Up Ah Resistance,” 475–501.
- ¹⁶⁴ See, for instance, the Digital Library of the Caribbean: <https://dloc.com/>; and the Huntley Film Archives: <https://www.huntleyarchives.com/>, which preserves film and licenses digitized films from the Caribbean beginning around 1895 into the twentieth century.
- ¹⁶⁵ Paula Amad, *Counter-Archive: Film, the Everyday, and Albert Kahn’s Archives de La Planète* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2010), 17. Amad refers to what lies beyond the focus or subject of the camera-holder, in this case, a wealthy merchant, Albert Kahn, who documents his travels. The camera captures the space, the people, including passersby, and the general movements, the foliage, clothing, etc. See also Zimmermann’s discussion of home movies and other nontheatrical, non-Hollywood, and nongovernmental films as producing knowledge and information outside of these ideological apparatuses in favour of “emergent subjectivities.” Patricia R. Zimmermann, “Morphing History into Histories: From Amateur Film to the Archive of the Future,” in *Mining the Home Movie: Excavations in Histories and Memories*, ed. Karen I. Ishizuka and Patricia R. Zimmermann (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2007), 275–88.
- ¹⁶⁶ Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 19. See also Ann Laura Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain: Epistemic Anxieties and Colonial Common Sense* (Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 2010), 20, 32. Chapter 2 discusses the ontological markers of the colonial archive. Donations to the CTASC are entirely voluntary. The workshops will document the reasoning behind these choices. Items in the official archives follow rules of provenance—how the community preserved their own archives may factor into the working relationship with the official archives. For example, permissions for access, curation, and promotion will be worked through with community members and written into contracts with the CSTASC. As addressed in the literature, the benefit of working with an official archives is the expertise, infrastructure, and budgets for preservation materials (acid-free containers, climate-controlled rooms, cataloguing, digital platforms). My role will be to act as an advocate for the community with the official archives.
- ¹⁶⁷ Pamela Franco, “The ‘Unruly Woman’ in Nineteenth-Century Trinidad Carnival,” *Small Axe* 4, no. 7 (2000): 60–76.
- ¹⁶⁸ Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 11.
- ¹⁶⁹ Patricia R. Zimmermann, introduction to *Mining the Home Movie*, 18.
- ¹⁷⁰ Jacqueline Najuma Stewart, “Foreword: Giving Voice, Taking Voice: Nonwhite and Nontheatrical,” in *Screening Race in American Nontheatrical Film*, ed. Allyson Nadia Field, Marsha Gordon, Jacqueline Najuma Stewart (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), xviii–xix.
- ¹⁷¹ Amad, *Counter-Archive*, 19–20.
- ¹⁷² Elizabeth L. Watson, “Breaking the Silence: The Case for Establishing Sound Archives in the Caribbean,” in Bastian, Griffin, and Aarons, *Decolonizing the Caribbean Record*, 524.
- ¹⁷³ Lewin, *Rock It Come Over*. Lewin created an audio archive of Jamaican folk songs by travelling and documenting Jamaica’s recorded history in song. Both she and the government (Edward Seaga, a minister of culture) recognized that modernization meant certain histories and the way in which the language was spoken and sung would not be passed on if they were not recorded on tape. There were indications that great cultural change would come, and

Lewin and Seaga's efforts parallel those of Louise Bennett-Coverley to retell traditional Anansi stories to preserve both the language and the culture.

- ¹⁷⁴ Similarly, Amalia Sabiescu maintains that acts of collective remembering enliven and make visible the evidence of the silent (or shadow) archive. Sabiescu uses performance and archival studies to “map two trajectories for transmitting knowledge and memory in the living archive: one centred on performance, achieved through embodied knowledge, liveness, and participatory experiences of memory; and the other rooted in memory objects of evidentiary value that are infused with meaningful (but silent) narratives that can be read through acts of collective remembering.” Sabiescu, “Living Archives,” 498.
- ¹⁷⁵ Grace Carter-Henry Lyons, interview with the author, November 1, 2023.
- ¹⁷⁶ Jonathan Sterne, *The Audible Past: Cultural Origins of Sound Reproduction* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2003), 13.
- ¹⁷⁷ Sterne, *Audible Past*, 13.
- ¹⁷⁸ Sterne, *Audible Past*, 297–98.
- ¹⁷⁹ Stories of participants, domestic worker interviews. See also *Nurses Care: It's a Boy!*, directed by Tanya Tree (National Film Board of Canada and Productions Pax Enr, 1992).
- ¹⁸⁰ Combahee River Collective, “A Black Feminist Statement,” *Monthly Review* 70, no. 8 (January 2019), 29–36, 2, 30, 32. I want to highlight the debt critical archival theory owes to intersectional analysis and actions stemming from Black feminist critiques of modernist theories that inscribe scientific racism, sexism, and ableism as normative, universal conditions. Concepts such as intersectional equality, collective care, teaching to resist and liberate—all are embedded in articles such as Michelle Caswell's “Teaching to Dismantle White Supremacy in Archives,” and yet there is no reference to the intellectual and social justice contributions of Black feminists. Instead, primarily White scholars are referenced in Caswell's article, in which the students' suggestions for resistance and care occur in a vacuum of Whiteness. Moreover, while Stuart Hall recognizes intersecting positionalities in his article “Old Identities, New Ethnicities,” and the developing role of the signifier “Black” in the 1970s, there is no attribution to the Black feminists in the UK or elsewhere in the genealogy of his ideas, silencing Black women by lack of citation.
- ¹⁸¹ Kimberlé Crenshaw, “Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,” *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (July 1991): 1241–99.
- ¹⁸² Patricia Hill Collins, *Intersectionality as Critical Social Theory* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 39.
- ¹⁸³ bell hooks, *Teaching Community: A Pedagogy of Hope* (New York: Routledge, 2003), 41.
- ¹⁸⁴ Davis, “From Jamaica to Canada.”
- ¹⁸⁵ Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, 86.
- ¹⁸⁶ Janet Momsen, “The Double Paradox,” in *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought*, ed. Patricia Mohammed (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press; Centre for Gender and Development Studies, 2002), 45.
- ¹⁸⁷ Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, 163.
- ¹⁸⁸ Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, 163. Emphasis mine.
- ¹⁸⁹ Honor Ford-Smith, “Laughter of Freedom: Louise Bennett, the Body and Anticolonial Performance,” in Johnson, *Louise Bennett and Jamiekian Langwaj*, 37–53.
- ¹⁹⁰ Bush, *Slave Women in Caribbean Society*, 116–17.
- ¹⁹¹ See, for instance, Verene Shepherd, *Women in Caribbean History* (Kingston, Jamaica: Ian Randle; James Currey, 1999), 22–23.
- ¹⁹² See the autoethnographic account of life as a darker-skinned woman in Canada in Erica Neegan, “Constructing My Cultural Identity: A Reflection on the Contradictions, Dilemmas, and Reality,” *Alberta Journal of Educational Research* 54, no. 3 (Fall 2008): 272–82. For an historical account of colourism, see Robert L. Reece, “Genesis of U.S. Colorism and Skin Tone Stratification: Slavery, Freedom, and Mulatto-Black Occupational Inequality in the Late 19th Century,” *Review of Black Political Economy* 45, no. 1 (2018): 3–21.
- ¹⁹³ bell hooks, *All About Love: New Visions, Love Song to the Nation* (New York: William Morrow, 2016), 119–21.
- ¹⁹⁴ Shaunasea Brown, “Beyond and Across the Mediterranean: Tending to the ‘Lost’ at Sea through Poetry and Collective Care,” *Interdisciplinary Humanities* 38, no. 1 (Spring 2021): 124–25. See also Gabrielle Jamela Hosein, “Caribbean Feminism, Activist Pedagogies and Transnational Dialogues,” *Feminist Review* 98, no. 1 (September 2011): 125. See also the edited anthology *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought*, ed. Patricia Mohammed, (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press; Centre for Gender and Development Studies, 2002). The chapters, taken together, reflect a nuanced, intersectional focus on gender, race, and class specific to Caribbean realities.

- ¹⁹⁵ Davis adopts the term from Toni Morrison.
- ¹⁹⁶ Davis, *Horizon, Sea, Sound*, 82–83.
- ¹⁹⁷ Davis, *Horizon, Sea, Sound*, 77, 97; M. NourbeSe Philip, *Zong!*, as told to the author by Setaey Adamu Boateng (Middletown, CT: Wesleyan University Press, 2011).
- ¹⁹⁸ Wynter, “Rethinking ‘Aesthetics,’” 258–59
- ¹⁹⁹ Brand, *Map to the Door*, 6.
- ²⁰⁰ Saidiya V. Hartman, *Lose Your Mother: A Journey along the Atlantic Slave Route* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 2007), 6.
- ²⁰¹ Henriette Gunkel and kara lynch, “Lift Off . . . An Introduction,” in *We Travel the Space Ways: Black Imagination, Fragments, and Diffractions*, ed. Henriette Gunkel and kara lynch (Bielefeld, Germany: transcript verlag, 2019), 35.
- ²⁰² 1.5 generation refers to the children of the first generation who were born in Jamaica but raised in Canada.
- ²⁰³ Davis, *Horizon, Sea, Sound*, 21.
- ²⁰⁴ “The Meaning of the Symbolism of the Sankofa Bird,” National Council on Black American Affairs, November 19, 2013, <https://wrcbaa-ncbaa.org/the-meaning-of-the-symbolism-of-the-sankofa-bird/>. Quoting from the website: “The concept of Sankofa is derived from King Adinkera of the Akan people of West Afrika. Sankofa is expressed in the Akan language as ‘se wo were fi na wosan kofa a yenki.’ Literally translated it means “it is not taboo to go back and fetch what you forgot.’ ‘Sankofa’ teaches us that we must go back to our roots in order to move forward. That is, we should reach back and gather the best of what our past has to teach us, so that we can achieve our full potential as we move forward. Whatever we have lost, forgotten, forgone or been stripped of, can be reclaimed, revived, preserved and perpetuated. Visually and symbolically ‘Sankofa’ is expressed as a mythic bird that flies forward while looking backward with an egg (symbolizing the future) in its mouth.”
- ²⁰⁵ Stuart Hall, “New Ethnicities [1988],” in *Selected Writings on Visual Arts and Culture*, ed. Gilane Tawadros (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2024), 65–76.
- ²⁰⁶ Davis, *Horizon, Sea, Sound*, 196.

Chapter 3

- ²⁰⁷ Noting the various ways in which “archive(s)” is used in the humanities versus the archival profession, I defer to the conventions in the archival profession in my research question by using the term “archives” in conversation with official archives. An archives (singular, but with an “s”) refers to the institution; while “the archive,” “an archive,” and “archives” refer to a collection of evidentiary records. I sometimes use “archive(s)” to refer both to the collection of records and to the architecture/institution that houses the records. See, for instance, “What Are Archives?,” Association of Canadian Archivists, accessed January 23, 2025, [https://archivists.ca/What-Are-Archives#:~:text=An%20archives%20works%20to%20acquire,policies%2C%20or%20many%20other%20reasons](https://archivists.ca/What-Are-Archives#:~:text=An%20archives%20works%20to%20acquire,policies%2C%20or%20many%20other%20reasons;); “What’s an Archives?,” National Archives, accessed May 25, 2025, <https://www.archives.gov/about/info/whats-an-archives.html#:~:text=An%20archives%20is%20a%20place,photographs%2C%20and%20other%20primary%20sources>; and Terry Cook, “The Archive(s) Is a Foreign Country: Historians, Archivists, and the Changing Archival Landscape,” *Canadian Historical Review* 90, no. 3 (2009): 497–534.
- ²⁰⁸ Elizabeth Thomas-Hope, Suzette Martin-Johnson, and Zelris Lawrence, *Migration in Jamaica: A Country Profile 2018* (Kingston, Jamaica: International Organization for Migration, 2018), 18; “Infographic: The World’s Biggest Diasporas,” Statista Daily Data, November 22, 2022, <https://www.statista.com/chart/4237/the-countries-with-the-most-people-living-overseas>.
- ²⁰⁹ *Jamaica and Canada: Connected by People, Travel and Trade*, Statistics Canada, February 3, 2023, <https://www.statcan.gc.ca/o1/en/plus/2880-jamaica-and-canada-connected-people-travel-and-trade>.
- ²¹⁰ For a discussion of social position and self-conceptions of Black youth in the 1970s and 1980s, see Carl E. James, “‘We Have to strive for the best’: The High Aspirations of Black Caribbean Canadian Youth of the 1970s and 1980s,” in *Unsettling the Great White North: Black Canadian History*, ed. Michele A. Johnson and Funké Aladejebi (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 357–79.
- ²¹¹ See <https://acij-ioj.org/jm/av-collections/>.
- ²¹² I refer to Stuart Hall’s engagement with Raymond Williams’s “structure of feeling” that points to an emerging culture in the UK due to the arrivants from the Caribbean. His scholarship was informed by the Black British artists and filmmakers who participated in the emerging culture.
- ²¹³ Hall, “Constituting an Archive,” 92.

- ²¹⁴ I refer here to Stanley Griffin thinking through archival practice and architecture based on how Caribbean records are created by the people themselves using digital video, sound systems, social media, and other performative archives.
- ²¹⁵ Owen Chapman, “Research-Creation: Intervention, Analysis and ‘Family Resemblances,’” *Canadian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 1 (April 2012): 8.
- ²¹⁶ Maggie O’Neill and Phil Hubbard, “Walking, Sensing, Belonging: Ethno-Mimesis as Performative Praxis,” *Visual Studies* 25, no. 1 (2010): 46–58.
- ²¹⁷ Kathleen M. Ryan and David Staton, introduction to *Interactive Documentary: Decolonizing Practice-Based Research* (New York: Routledge, 2022), 7. See also Hazel Smith and Roger T. Dean, *Practice-Led Research, Research-Led Practice in the Creative Arts* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 2009).
- ²¹⁸ Sarah Pink, *Doing Sensory Ethnography* (Los Angeles: SAGE, 2015).
- ²¹⁹ Owen Chapman and Kim Sawchuk, “Creation-as-Research: Critical Making in Complex Environments,” *RACAR: Revue d’art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review* 40, no. 1 (2015): 49. See also Natalie Loveless, who points out the geographical specificity to the term “research-creation” and lists other cognate (English) appellations and historical terms still in use today in the US and UK, such as “practice-based research”; “practice-led research,” and “artistic research.” Natalie Loveless, “Towards a Manifesto on Research-Creation,” *RACAR: Revue d’art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review* 40, no. 1 (2015): 52.
- ²²⁰ In Katherine McKittrick’s and Fred Moten’s phrasing, Black studies methodologies are inherently disobedient.
- ²²¹ See also Stoler, *Along the Archival Grain*; Chapman and Sawchuk, “Creation-as-Research,” 6.
- ²²² Chapman and Sawchuk. “Creation-as-Research,” 50.
- ²²³ Chapman “Research-Creation,” 6.
- ²²⁴ Chapman “Research-Creation,” 15–19.
- ²²⁵ See artist-scholar Miguel Santos responding to Simon Biggs’s research query, in Simon Biggs, “New Media: The ‘First Word’ in Art?,” in Smith and Dean, *Practice-Led Research*, 66–83. See also Caitlin Fisher, “Mentoring Research-Creation: Secrets, Strategies, and Beautiful Failures,” *RACAR: Revue d’art Canadienne/Canadian Art Review* 40, no. 1 (2015): 46–49.
- ²²⁶ Roshini Kempadoo, “Future Belonging—a Case Study in Practice-Based Research,” *Journal of Media Practice* 2, no. 3 (January 2002): 138–46.
- ²²⁷ Loveless, “Towards a Manifesto,” 53.
- ²²⁸ Cynthia Noury and Louis-Claude Paquin, *(Re)Visiting Our Previous Contributions for Research-Creation [as Practice]—A Performative and Polyvocal Writing Project*, prepublication version, Fall 2020, http://lcpaquin.com/RcAsPractice_Interactive_NouryPaquin_F2020.pdf, 10, 13.
- ²²⁹ Brad Haseman, “A Manifesto for Performative Research,” *Media International Australia* 118, no. 1 (February 2006): 99–100.
- ²³⁰ For instance, Marshall McLuhan, Donna Haraway, Roland Barthes, and Caitlin Fisher are named in Chapman, “Research-Creation,” 6.
- ²³¹ Natalie Loveless, *How to Make Art at the End of the World: A Manifesto for Research-Creation* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2019), 40.
- ²³² Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London; New York: Zed Books, 2006), 180–81.
- ²³³ Kathleen M. Ryan and David Staton, “Agency through Co-Creation: Interactive Documentary as Decolonizing Practice,” in *Interactive Documentary: Decolonizing Practice-Based Research*, ed. Kathleen M. Ryan and David Staton (New York: Routledge, 2022), 221–31.
- ²³⁴ Rodney, *Groundings*, 50–51.
- ²³⁵ An example of research-creation as a mode of knowledge production was evident in the metal workers in Jamaica during the eighteenth century. See Jenny Bulstrode, “Black Metallurgists and the Making of the Industrial Revolution,” *History and Technology* 39, no. 1 (2023): 1–41.
- ²³⁶ The term “creolization” was first coined by Kamau Brathwaite in *The Development of Creole Society in Jamaica: 1770–1820*, primarily to address racial and cultural genealogies. Scholars interrogated the concept across socioeconomic and cultural discourses in a seminal edited volume by Verene A. Shepherd and Glen L. Richards, *Questioning Creole*. I activate the term in the sense that Roshini Kempadoo and others do, referring to the remix of cultures and practices that stemmed from the plantation and continue today.
- ²³⁷ Stanley H. Griffin, “Records management of Jamaica,” *Vakblad Od I Overheidsdocumentatie*, accessed February 7, 2024, <https://od-online.nl/artikel/recordsmanagement-op-jamaica/>.

- ²³⁸ I want to address here the important work archives are doing to decolonize the institution from within, which includes the work Melissa Nelson is doing at the Archives of Ontario and the work the CTASC is doing with respect to community archives.
- ²³⁹ Wendy Hui Kyong Chun, “Race and/as Technology; or, How to Do Things to Race,” *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 24, no. 1 (2009): 7–35.
- ²⁴⁰ Beth Coleman, “Race as Technology,” *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 24, no. 1 (2009): 182–84.
- ²⁴¹ The Jamaican Canadian Association fonds at Library and Archives Canada documents many of these contributions: issues of *Reggae Quarterly*; the Black Caucus paper “Overcoming the Challenges Confronting Toronto’s Black Community,” by Derek Lett (2002); and testimony in interviews with former president of the JCA, Vincent Conville, whose doctoral research investigated the contributions of the Jamaican community to Toronto in particular, and whose research resulted in the JCA fonds at LAC. This was also reflected in the audio interviews of this research, namely with Vincent Conville and Francis Nand, as well as in *Nurses Care: It’s a Boy!*, a documentary directed by Tanya Tree featuring participant Judith Andrade.
- ²⁴² Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 27, 89–95.
- ²⁴³ Coleman, “Race as Technology,” 200.
- ²⁴⁴ Stanley Griffin, “Noises in the Archives: Acknowledging the Present Yet Silenced Presence in Caribbean Archival Memory,” in *Archival Silences: Missing, Lost and Uncreated Archives*, ed. Michael Moss and David Thomas (London: Routledge, 2021), 86.
- ²⁴⁵ Coleman, “Race as Technology,” 202.
- ²⁴⁶ Jay David Bolter and Richard Grusin, *Remediation: Understanding New Media*, (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2003), 45.
- ²⁴⁷ Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 9
- ²⁴⁸ Leah A. Lievrouw, *Alternative and Activist New Media* (Cambridge, MA: Polity, 2011), 219.
- ²⁴⁹ Glissant, *Poetics of Relation*, 19.
- ²⁵⁰ Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 231.
- ²⁵¹ Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 231.
- ²⁵² Nazi filmmaker Leni Riefenstahl poses one example.
- ²⁵³ See Mark V. Campbell’s North Side Hip Hop Archive’s emphasis on the digitization of sounds, music, and oral histories; and Sabiescu, “Living Archives.” David Carlin and Laurene Vaughan further theorize the living archive through performance, thinking through digital activation as performing the archive. David Carlin and Laurene Vaughan, eds., *Performing Digital: Multiple Perspectives on a Living Archive* (Farnham, UK: Taylor & Francis Group, 2016). See also Giulia Battaglia, Jennifer Clarke, and Fiona Sieghaler, “Bodies of Archives/Archival Bodies: An Introduction,” *Visual Anthropology Review* 36, no. 1 (2020): 8–16.
- ²⁵⁴ Derrida, “Archive Fever.”
- ²⁵⁵ Hal Foster, “An Archival Impulse,” *October* 11 (October 2004): 3–22.
- ²⁵⁶ The project aims to address concerns about cultural rights to privacy, first, by ensuring there is consent/permissions to digitize and preserve these materials, and second, by developing access protocols with donors/participants. The proposed movement search is one such protocol that I hypothesize as a method to access cultural archives.
- ²⁵⁷ Bolter and Grusin, *Remediation*, 232.
- ²⁵⁸ Grace Carter-Henry Lyons, in discussion with the author, December 2022 and on other occasions.
- ²⁵⁹ Donette Francis, “A Spirit of Inquiry: Convening Jamaica as Method,” *Small Axe* 24, no. 3 (2020): 181. See also Margaret Nakhid-Chatoor et al., “Exploring Liming and Ole Talk as a Culturally Relevant Methodology for Researching with Caribbean People,” *International Journal of Qualitative Methods* 17, no. 1 (December 2018): 1–10. The methodology liming and ole talk, theorized by Nakhid-Chatoor et al., applies circuits of care to the Caribbean diasporic context and provides a way in which to dialogue and conduct informal interviews with focus groups. The term is primarily used in Trinidad and Tobago, as well as Guyana, but is understood and practiced throughout the Caribbean to describe social gatherings, both big and small, in which people hang out, celebrate, mourn, and generally be together over food and drink while “doing nothing.” In this participatory research-creation methodology, participants are regarded as agents and knowledge keepers of the archive and the methodology necessarily includes their own critical fabrications.
- ²⁶⁰ Francis, “Spirit of Inquiry,” 182–23.
- ²⁶¹ Rodney, *Groundings*.
- ²⁶² Nakhid-Chatoor et al., “Exploring Liming and Ole Talk,” 1, 2.
- ²⁶³ Scott MacKenzie and Janine Marchessault, introduction to *Process Cinema: Handmade Film in the Digital Age* (Montreal, Kingston: McGill-Queen’s University Press, 2019), 3.

- ²⁶⁴ MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 4.
- ²⁶⁵ David Woodruff Smith, “Phenomenology,” in *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*, ed. Edward N. Zalta (Stanford, CA: Metaphysics Research Lab, Stanford University, 2018).
- ²⁶⁶ MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 4.
- ²⁶⁷ MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 4. See also Maurice Merleau-Ponty, “The Film and the New Psychology,” [1964], in *Philosophers on Film from Bergson to Badiou: A Critical Reader*, ed. Christopher Want (New York: Columbia University Press, 2019) 97–112.
- ²⁶⁸ See Solomon Nagler, “Dismantling the Cinema: Restraining Presentness with Locative Media and Experimental Architecture,” in MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 440–58.
- ²⁶⁹ Tess Takahashi, “Writing the World: Medium Specificity and Avant-Garde Film in the Digital Age,” in MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 459–82.
- ²⁷⁰ Takahashi, “Writing the World,” 468, 470.
- ²⁷¹ MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 6, 9.
- ²⁷² Philip Hoffman “A Film Farm Manifesto,” in MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 292–93.
- ²⁷³ Phytograms were developed by Karel Doing. See for instance, Karel Doing, “Phytograms: Rebuilding Human–Plant Affiliations,” *Animation* 15, no. 1 (March 2020): 22–36.
- ²⁷⁴ Clint Enns “Hardware Hacking , Software Modding, and File Manipulation: Process Cinema in the Digital Age,” in MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 483.
- ²⁷⁵ Philip Hoffman speaking at the screening “Philip Hoffman: Collaborations & Meditations,” Ad Hoc, Innis Town Hall, University of Toronto, February 21, 2024.
- ²⁷⁶ See also Takahashi, “Writing the World,” 462.
- ²⁷⁷ Takahashi, “Writing the World,” 459.
- ²⁷⁸ The spelling is adopted from the creolized term “old-talk” to indicate “idle chatter; gossip; social chit-chat,” as defined in Richard Allsopp and Jeannette Allsopp, eds., *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1996). The term is employed in the explication of the methodology in Nakhid-Chatoor et al., “Exploring Liming and Ole Talk.”
- ²⁷⁹ These portraits were an insightful suggestion by Dr. Michele Johnson, also a member of the community.

Chapter 4

- ²⁸⁰ This phrase loosely translates to whether one’s spirit takes to someone, referring to the intuitive feeling one has for another. It corresponds to the English colloquial phrase “sussing someone out.”
- ²⁸¹ Brand, *Map to the Door*, 5.
- ²⁸² Brand, *Map to the Door*, 6.
- ²⁸³ Tina Campt, *Listening to Images* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2017).
- ²⁸⁴ Ann Cvetkovich, “In the Archives of Lesbian Feelings: Documentary and Popular Culture,” *Camera Obscura: Feminism, Culture, and Media Studies* 17, no. 1 (49) (May 2002): 100.
- ²⁸⁵ Zakiya Collier and Tonia Sutherland, “Witnessing, Testimony, and Transformation as Genres of Black Archival Practice,” *Black Scholar* 52, no. 2 (2022): 8.
- ²⁸⁶ “The Montgomery Collection of Caribbean Photographs, a singular collection of more than 3,500 historical images from 34 countries including Jamaica, Barbados and Trinidad. Perhaps the largest collections of such images, this incredible visual record contains studio portraits, landscapes and tourist views.” “AGO Acquires World Class Collection of Historical Caribbean Photographs,” Art Gallery of Ontario, June 5, 2019, <https://ago.ca/press-release/ago-acquires-world-class-collection-historical-caribbean-photographs>. A number of photographs from the collection are showcased on the website the Caribbean Photo Archive, <http://www.caribbeanphotoarchive.com/> (accessed October 23, 2024).
- ²⁸⁷ Moore and Johnson, “*They Do as They Please*,” 81.
- ²⁸⁸ I adopt the spelling from Michele A. Johnson’s commemorative volume on Louise Bennett’s advocacy for the recognition of Jamaican as a bona fide language, *Louise Bennett and Jamiekan Langwif: Commemorations and Critical Perspectives*.
- ²⁸⁹ W. E. B. Du Bois, *The Souls of Black Folk* (Boulder, CO: Paradigm, 2004), 2; Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 84.
- ²⁹⁰ Michele A. Johnson and Funké Aladejebi, introduction to *Unsettling the Great White North: Black Canadian History* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2022), 3.
- ²⁹¹ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 84.

- ²⁹² See, for instance, Moore and Johnson, “*They Do as They Please*,” 5–7.
- ²⁹³ “Principles for Conducting Research in the Jane-Finch Community,” Jane-Finch Community Research Partnership, October 2021, <https://janefinchresearch.ca>.
- ²⁹⁴ Marchessault, “Amateur Video,” 359.
- ²⁹⁵ They received one arts council grant in nearly fifty years. Since they are a small folk group, they are generally ineligible for provincial and federal arts and heritage grants.
- ²⁹⁶ Michael Akladios, founder and executive director of Egypt Migrations, in discussion with the author, April 6, 2022. Akladios founded Egyptian Migrations: A Public Humanities Project as a PhD student at York. Some records were donated to the CTASC, and he strongly recommended I obtain an MOU to ensure timely access of those records.
- ²⁹⁷ Anna St. Onge, associate archivist, interim head, Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections, in discussion with the author, November 20, 2024.
- ²⁹⁸ A community archives panel at Congress 2022, “Building and Animating Archives to Give Voice to Communities: A Roundtable Discussion,” with representatives from community archives created by former doctoral students at York University and connected to the CTASC, suggested the CTASC had a de facto specialization in community archives.
- ²⁹⁹ Melissa Nelson, archivist, Archives of Ontario, email correspondence, February 2, 2025.
- ³⁰⁰ Michele Johnson, associate dean and professor of history, in discussion with the author, February 3, 2022.
- ³⁰¹ See, for instance, the archives under “reggae” on the website Then & Now: Toronto Nightlife History: <http://thenandnowtoronto.com/category/music-genres/reggae/>; “Little Jamaica Music History Walking Tour,” Canada Black Music Archives, accessed May 31, 2025, <https://thecbma.com/little-jamaica-music-history-tour/>; “Rhythms and Resistance: Caribbean Music in Toronto,” Heritage Toronto, accessed May 31, 2025, <https://www.heritagetoronto.org/programs/heritage-toronto-awards/2022-public-history-award-nominees/rhythms-and-resistance/>.
- ³⁰² See the Afrosonic Innovation Lab: <https://afrosonicinnovationlab.com/>; *Sounds & Pressure: Reggae in a Foreign Land*, directed by Chris Flanagan and Graeme Mathieson (National Film Board of Canada, 2024).
- ³⁰³ See Rewind/Forward: <https://www.rewind-forward.ca/about>.
- ³⁰⁴ Michelle Caswell is a leading White scholar who uses a critical race studies lens to dismantle white supremacy in the archives. See Caswell, “Teaching to Dismantle.”
- ³⁰⁵ Maureen Richards, Caribbean Seniors Group, Jamaican Canadian Association, interview with the author, April 2, 2024.
- ³⁰⁶ Participants waived anonymity in the informed consent form.
- ³⁰⁷ See, for instance, Gerry Veenstra, “Expressed Racial Identity and Hypertension in a Telephone Survey Sample from Toronto and Vancouver, Canada: Do Socioeconomic Status, Perceived Discrimination and Psychosocial Stress Explain the Relatively High Risk of Hypertension for Black Canadians?,” *International Journal for Equity in Health* 11, no. 58 (2012): 1–10; A. Azin, “Black Race Is Associated with Increased Mortality in Colon Cancer: A Population-Based and Propensity-Score Matched Analysis,” *Canadian Journal of Surgery* 64 (December 2021): S124.
- ³⁰⁸ Patsy Sutherland, “The History, Philosophy, and Transformation of Caribbean Healing Traditions,” in *Caribbean Healing Traditions*, ed. Patsy Sutherland, Roy Moodley, and Barry Chevannes (New York: Routledge, 2013), 22–23; Sylvia Mitchell, Kevel C. Lindsay, and Anthony Richards, *Bio-Prospecting in the Caribbean Region: Caribbean ABS Institutional Mapping* (Gland, Switzerland: International Union for Conservation of Nature and Natural Resources, 2018), 11.
- ³⁰⁹ Tatijana Vujicic and Damian Cohall, “Knowledge, Attitudes and Practices on the Use of Botanical Medicines in a Rural Caribbean Territory,” *Frontiers in Pharmacology* 12 (2021): 2, 8.
- ³¹⁰ Judith Andrade, Melody Brown, Patrick BJ Brown, Gertrude King, and Alton Stephenson, interview with the author, August 23, 2023.
- ³¹¹ Knowledge mobilization of this research will include a screening whereby I return to the community to show the video created with their images.
- ³¹² “Duppy” is a Jamaican word used also in other Caribbean Creole to refer to the presence of a supernatural, invisible spirit, often invoked with a negative connotation. See Allsopp and Allsopp, *Dictionary of Caribbean English Usage*, 207.
- ³¹³ Rinaldo Walcott, *Black Like Who?: Writing Black Canada* (London, ON: Insomniac Press, 2003), 59; Wynter, “Rethinking ‘Aesthetics,’” 267.
- ³¹⁴ Janine Marchessault, “Some Recipes for Disaster in the Films of Deirdre Logue and Helen Hill,” in MacKenzie and Marchessault, *Process Cinema*, 357–58.
- ³¹⁵ *Geographies of Solitude*, directed by Jacquelyn Mills (2022).

- ³¹⁶ Foucault, *Archaeology of Knowledge*.
- ³¹⁷ Niaah, *DanceHall*, 19.
- ³¹⁸ Phil Campbell, member of Heritage Singers, interview with the author.
- ³¹⁹ See Jacqueline Najumah Stewart, “‘Negroes Laughing at Themselves’?: Black Spectatorship and the Performance of Urban Modernity,” in *Migrating to the Movies: Cinema and Black Urban Modernity* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005), 93–113; Mary Bucholtz and Quiana Lopez, “Performing Blackness, Forming Whiteness: Linguistic Minstrelsy in Hollywood Film,” *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 15, no. 5 (2011): 680–706. For research on the performance of Blackness in Canada, see Andrea Davis, “‘Jamaican’ as Synecdoche for Black Male Identification: Performing Blackness in Toronto,” *Histoire Sociale/Social History* 55, no. 114 (2022): 399–416; Naila Keleta-Mae, *Performing Female Blackness* (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier University Press, 2023), 24. Keleta-Mae refers to the labour of perpetual performance requiring “inhabitants of bodies read as female and Black in Canada to constantly perform other people’s fantasies of female blackness in public and private spaces for spectators who are and are not white.”
- ³²⁰ Trinh T. Minh-ha, *When the Moon Waxes Red: Representation, Gender and Cultural Politics* (New York: Routledge, 2013), 33–34. Trinh refers to the constructed authenticity of documentary conventions such as diegetic and “lip-synchronous” sounds, wide camera angles, and the use of a camera steadied on a tripod.
- ³²¹ Taylor, *Archive and the Repertoire*, 28.
- ³²² Paula Amad, “Visual Riposte: Looking Back at the Return of the Gaze as Postcolonial Theory’s Gift to Film Studies,” *Cinema Journal* 52, no. 3 (March 2013): 49–75; Terri Francis, “Sounding the Nation: Martin Rennalls and the Jamaica Film Unit, 1951–1961,” *Film History* 23, no. 2 (2011): 110–28.
- ³²³ Rodney, *Groundings*, 72.
- ³²⁴ I also used expired colour and black-and-white film that played up the graininess and imperfections of the film surface. See *Long Time Gyal*: <https://vimeo.com/1015880232/b51edaff1e>.
- ³²⁵ Marchessault, “Some Recipes for Disaster.”
- ³²⁶ Marchessault, “Some Recipes for Disaster,” 354.
- ³²⁷ The connection between colour and emotions and the effects of coloured light are addressed in the following articles: Eva Brumberger and Kathryn Northcut, “Teaching Form and Color as Emotion Triggers,” in *Designing Texts: Teaching Visual Communication* (New York: Routledge, 2013); Jesus Minguillon et al., “Blue Lighting Accelerates Post-Stress Relaxation: Results of a Preliminary Study,” *PLoS ONE* 12, no. 10 (2017): 1–16.
- ³²⁸ Barbara Flückiger, “Film Colors: Materiality, Technology, Aesthetics,” in *Color Mania: Materialität Farbe in Fotografie und Film*, ed. Barbara Flückiger, Eva Hielscher, and Nadine Wietlisbach (Zurich: Lars Müller, 2020), 18.
- ³²⁹ Philip’s poems are gleaned from the court decision on the insurance claim “to not tell the story that must be told.” Philip, *Zong!*, 189.
- ³³⁰ See Harris, *Punishing the Black Body*, for a comprehensive investigation on punishment in Barbados and Jamaica from the lens of the Black body during enslavement and in the immediate post-emancipation period.
- ³³¹ Brown, “Art Routes”; Alice Walker, *In Search of Our Mothers’ Gardens: Prose* (New York: Open Road, 2011), 12; Alice Walker, *The Color Purple* (New York: Pocket Books, 1985).
- ³³² Wray & Nephew is the strongest in terms of alcohol percentage at 63% and also regarded as the most potent medicinally. Despite other brands of rum, Wray & Nephew stands apart in the culture.
- ³³³ Reuters-CANA, “Jamaica Leads in Bauxite,” *Jamaica Gleaner*, December 17, 1976. This citation was taken directly from the newspaper wrapped around my aunt’s furniture when she left Jamaica.
- ³³⁴ Brown, “Art Routes,” 202.
- ³³⁵ Grace Carter-Henry Lyons, in discussion with the author on multiple occasions, 2022–24. This “origin story” is also recorded in the Heritage Singers’ biography and frames their fonds at the CTASC. See appendix F.
- ³³⁶ See Nicolas Bourriaud, *Relational Aesthetics* (Dijon: Les Presses du réel, 2002), 44.
- ³³⁷ Wynter, “Rethinking ‘Aesthetics,’” 241.
- ³³⁸ Adrian Kahgee and Debbie Ebanks Schlums, “Worlds Meeting Worlds: Murmuration, Aesthetics, and Odeimin Runners,” *PUBLIC* 34, no. 68 (December 2023): 92–100, 93.
- ³³⁹ Wynter, “Rethinking ‘Aesthetics,’” 242.
- ³⁴⁰ Further interrogations of the gaze could be made with these juxtapositions. My purpose here is simply to raise the question of the gaze in relation to the agency of the subject through the media installation, such as through the lens of Paula Amad’s visual riposte. Amad, “Visual Riposte.”
- ³⁴¹ See Jonathan Sterne’s discussion of the exteriority of the recording, its distance from the event recorded, and its status as what he calls a mnemonic for a future recalling of the event. Sterne, *Audible Past*, 320.

- ³⁴² Brand, *Map to the Door*, 35.
- ³⁴³ Lewin, *Rock It Come Over*, 82–83. In Jamaica, these folk songs continue to be archived performatively, whether as children’s songs or revisited in a contemporary television series called *Hill an’ Gully Ride*, which introduces local places to the audience: <http://cptcjamaica.com/jamvision/hill-an-gully-ride/>.
- ³⁴⁴ Moore and Johnson, “*They Do as They Please*,” 88, 158–59.
- ³⁴⁵ Griffin, “Putting Up Ah Resistance,” 482.
- ³⁴⁶ Michael Moss and David Thomas, introduction to *Archival Silences*, 18.
- ³⁴⁷ Moss and Thomas, *Archival Silences*, 17.
- ³⁴⁸ See Camille Turner’s exhibition *Otherworld*, Art Museum at the University of Toronto, curated by Barbara Fischer, September 4, 2024–March 22, 2025, <https://artmuseum.utoronto.ca/exhibition/otherworld/>; as well as video installations by Isaac Julien: <https://www.isaacjulien.com>.
- ³⁴⁹ Emily Zobel Marshall discusses these tensions in favour of the resistive qualities of Anansi’s impact on Jamaican culture. Marshall, *Anansi’s Journey*. See also “Miss Lou on Anancy and Smoked Pork,” posted September 3, 2019, by National Library of Jamaica, YouTube, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9UAWbeRkwwc>.
- ³⁵⁰ Opal Palmer Adisa, “Culture and Nationalism on the World Stage: Louise Bennett’s Aunty Roachy Seh Stories,” *Global South* 4, no. 2 (2010): 127.
- ³⁵¹ Marshall, *Anansi’s Journey*, 15–16. See also Emma Kathryn, “Anansi the Trickster ~ Weaving the Webs of Stories & Life,” Sul Books, accessed October 31, 2024, <https://abeautifulresistance.org/site/2021/3/26/anansi-the-trickster-weaving-the-webs-of-stories-amp-life>; and Kweku Ananse, “Anansi the Spider: Tales and Mythology from the Ashanti Kingdom,” Ananse Story, June 11, 2023, <https://anansestory.africa/anansi-the-spider/>.
- ³⁵² Sylvia Wynter and Katherine McKittrick, “Unparalleled Catastrophe For Our Species?: Or, to Give Humanness a Different Future: Conversations,” in *Sylvia Wynter*, ed. Katherine McKittrick, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2015), 25.
- ³⁵³ Honor Ford-Smith (with Sistren), “Grandma’s Estate,” in *Gendered Realities: Essays in Caribbean Feminist Thought*, ed. Patricia Mohammed (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press; Centre for Gender and Development Studies, 2002), 439–59.
- ³⁵⁴ I am grateful to my daughter, Alessandra Schlums, for these three-dimensional renderings.
- ³⁵⁵ Haidee Wasson, *Everyday Movies: Portable Film Projectors and the Transformation of American Culture* (Oakland: University of California Press, 2021). Wasson refers to the portability of the projector as a key factor in broadening audiences for educational materials, from the military to the classroom.
- ³⁵⁶ “Workshops,” Melissa J. Nelson (personal website), September 8, 2024, <https://melissajnelson.com/workshops/>.

Chapter 5

- ³⁵⁷ Caswell, *Urgent Archives*, 7.
- ³⁵⁸ Patricio Dávila, “Visualization as Assemblage: Exploring Critical Visualization Practice,” *Information Design Journal* 23, no. 1 (2017): 19–31.
- ³⁵⁹ Jamaican for “in a foreign land”; in this case, referring to Canada.
- ³⁶⁰ Fanon, *Black Skin, White Masks*, 89.
- ³⁶¹ Michel de Certeau, *The Practice of Everyday Life*, trans. Steven Rendall (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2013), 29–42.
- ³⁶² The *Jamaica Gleaner* (founded in 1834) is the longest-running newspaper in the island and known simply as the *Gleaner*.
- ³⁶³ Christina Elizabeth Sharpe, *In the Wake: On Blackness and Being* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2016), 102–34.
- ³⁶⁴ Cooper, *Noises in the Blood*, 8–9.
- ³⁶⁵ James, *Beyond a Boundary*, 196.
- ³⁶⁶ See Gilroy, *Black Atlantic*; and Sylvia Wynter, “Unsettling the Coloniality of Being/Power/Truth/Freedom: Towards the Human, After Man, Its Overrepresentation—An Argument,” *CR: The New Centennial Review* 3, no. 3 (2003): 266.
- ³⁶⁷ Cooper, *Noises in the Blood*, 4–5.
- ³⁶⁸ Cooper, *Noises in the Blood*, 22.
- ³⁶⁹ The Rastafarian lexicon is its own archive. As Carole-Anne Manget-Johnson explains, “Dread Talk is talk or language that articulates the Rastafarian’s resistance to oppression.” Quoted in Griffin, “Putting Up Ah Resistance,” 481.
- ³⁷⁰ Sharpe, *In the Wake*, 102–34.
- ³⁷¹ “Jokify” means “prone to jokes or jollity.” Frederic Gomes and Robert Brock Le Page, *Dictionary of Jamaican English*, 2nd ed. (Kingston, Jamaica: University of the West Indies Press, 2002), 252.

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APPENDIX A

Recruitment Poster

The poster features a vertical title 'JAMAICAN DIASPORIC ARCHIVES' on the left side, with 'JAMAICAN' in yellow, 'DIASPORIC' in green, and 'ARCHIVES' in yellow. The background is black with colorful, flowing abstract shapes in red, orange, and blue. A yellow banner at the top right contains the text 'RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS FOR A STUDY!' in red. The main text is white, with some words in yellow and green to match the title's color scheme.

JAMAICAN DIASPORIC ARCHIVES

RECRUITING PARTICIPANTS FOR A STUDY!

Are you Jamaican? Did you immigrate to Canada before the 1980s? Would you like to participate in a study to imagine and create a **Jamaican Diasporic Archives?**

Participants will engage in arts-based research using their own personal archives during workshops at [Community Space] in [Municipality].
Time Commitment: 10.5 Hours

Discussions, dancing, digitizing + making!

* Refreshments and \$150 honorarium provided

For more information please contact:

Debbie Ebanks Schlums
drebanks@yorku.ca

[*approved by York University Research Ethics Board]

Funded by
Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council
Archive/Counter-Archive
Harriet Tubman Institute
Academic Excellence Fund, York University

APPENDIX B

Workshop Schedule

From: Debbie Ebanks Schlums
Sent: August 15, 2023 8:21 PM
To: Debbie Ebanks Schlums <drebanks@yorku.ca>
Subject: Archiving workshop this Saturday, Aug 19, 10-2.

Hello Everyone,

Thank you for your interest in researching Jamaican Diasporic Archives! I am looking forward to gathering, learning and sharing stories with you. The focus group is an intimate setting with a maximum of 5 people. Below is a loose schedule as a guideline. We can take the conversation and activities where we think it should go depending on what the moment brings. This is all about what it means to be a Jamaican in Canada and what we think preserves our culture here and how.

If you haven't already done so, please send me a quick text/what's app to message (705-896-6800) or reply to this email to confirm your attendance and let me know if you have any dietary restrictions. Also feel free to contact me if you have any questions!

Warmest regards,

Debbie

StreamsHub is booked for Saturday, August 19 from 10am-2pm to meet.

Suggested Schedule

10am - 10:30am

Meet and greet with refreshments

Filling out informed consent forms; honoraria; questions about the project

10:30am-12:00pm

Telling stories

This part is meant to be conversational and will be recorded audio only

12pm-12:45pm Lunch provided

12:45pm - 2pm

Guided discussion with interview questions (audio only recording)

Digitizing archives (To be continued at next workshop)

What to bring:

1. anything you consider an archive - you get to define what the archive is
2. a list of items you hope to have digitized : rare vinyl records, documents, photographs, VHS tapes, cassette tapes
we'll be able to start some digitizing, and continue and the next workshops (3 workshops in total)
3. a list of digital photographs you would like to have printed for your personal archive

Debbie Ebanks Schlums
PhD Student
Vanier Scholar
Cinema and Media Studies
York University
debbieebanksschlums.com

APPENDIX C

Interview Questions

1. When did you come to Canada and how old were you?
2. Did you emigrate with family or to reunite with family in Canada?
3. Can you speak Patwa? If so, how does speaking the language make you feel? How do your gestures change? What do these movements mean to you?
4. What kinds of stories do you remember and wish to tell and record?
5. What kinds of dances or dance moves have you learned and who taught you? What music instigates the dance?
6. Did you learn the movement in Jamaica or Canada? Have you taught anyone else these movements (e.g. younger family members)?
7. Did these stories/movements/dance/gestures change over time while living in Canada? If they did change, how did they adapt to new contexts in Canada?
8. Do you have a personal collection you might consider as your family archives? What materials do they contain?
9. How are you taking care of your personal archives?
10. Who are you preserving these archives for? Do you think any are part of a community/national/international story, and if so, how might you share it with a larger community?
11. If you could preserve, store, and share these archives in a way you could choose, what would the archives (materials) and archives (repository) look like? How would the archives (repository) operate to preserve and access?

APPENDIX D

Ethics Approval



OFFICE OF
RESEARCH
ETHICS (ORE)
309 York Lanes

4700 Keele St.
Toronto ON
Canada M3J 1P3
Tel 416 736 5914
Fax 416 736-5512
www.research.yorku.ca

Certificate #:	STU 2022-023
Approval Period:	03/09/22-03/09/23

ETHICS APPROVAL

To: **Debbie Ebanks Schlums**
Graduate Student of Cinema & Media Studies/Film
drebanks@yorku.ca

From: Alison M. Collins-Mrakas, Director, Research Ethics
(on behalf of You-ta Chuang, Chair, Human Participants Review Committee)

Date: Wednesday, March 9, 2022

Title: **Caribbean Diasporic Counter-Archives: Performative Archival Imaginings and Memory Making in the Jamaican Diaspora**

Risk Level: Minimal Risk More than Minimal Risk

Level of Review: Delegated Review Full Committee Review

I am writing to inform you that this research project, “**Caribbean Diasporic Counter-Archives: Performative Archival Imaginings and Memory Making in the Jamaican Diaspora**” has received ethics review and approval by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University’s Ethics Review Board and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines.

Note that approval is granted for one year. Ongoing research – research that extends beyond one year – must be renewed prior to the expiry date.

Any changes to the approved protocol must be reviewed and approved through the amendment process by submission of an amendment application to the HPRC prior to its implementation.

Any adverse or unanticipated events in the research should be reported to the Office of Research ethics (ore@yorku.ca) as soon as possible.

For further information on researcher responsibilities as it pertains to this approved research ethics protocol, please refer to the attached document, “**RESEARCH ETHICS: PROCEDURES to ENSURE ONGOING COMPLIANCE**”.

Please note that due to ongoing changes with the pandemic, all researchers must review the procedures on the [YuBetter website](#) (Section: Coming to Campus) as there may be changes to protocol requirements.

Should you have any questions, please feel free to contact me at: 416-736-5914 or via email at: acollins@yorku.ca.

Yours sincerely,

Alison M. Collins-Mrakas M.Sc., LLM
Director,
Office of Research Ethics

APPENDIX E

Informed Consent Forms

Informed Consent Form—Focus Groups

Date:

Study Name: Jamaican Diasporic Archives: Performative Archival Imaginings and Memory Making

Researcher name:

Debbie Ebanks Schlums
PhD Candidate, Cinema and Media Studies
York University
Principal Investigator
Supervisor: Dr. Janine Marchessault
drebanks@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this research-creation project is to make a participatory audio-visual archive of the Jamaican Diaspora in southern Ontario. If there are artifacts or documents participants wish to preserve for the public, I will work with the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections to ensure these materials are carefully appraised, described, and preserved in their collection. I will work with a trained archivist, to ensure the archiving process meets professional standards and advise on best practices to preserve archives at home.

The research will culminate in an interactive media installation for which participants' input will inform the design and suggestions incorporated where possible. The media installation will have projectors, screens, and speakers that viewers may activate to display audiovisual recordings from the research. There may be exhibitions, educational tours, class and conference presentations, a dissertation, and publications.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

You will engage in a group conversation during in-person workshops with the researcher, Debbie Ebanks Schlums. You will be asked to collectively digitize or print digital personal archival materials and relate your own personal, family, or community oral history in response to a set of questions which will be recorded on video and/or audio.

You will be asked for your consent throughout the process.

You will be expected to participate for approximately 10.5 hours over a series of workshops. The workshops will be divided into three sessions of approximately 3.5 hours. Alternate scheduling may be negotiated between focus group participants and the researcher, for instance, two workshops of five hours duration.

Risks and Discomforts:

Though low-risk, memory recollection and the telling of oral histories may stir up an array of emotions. You may omit from answering any questions that make you uncomfortable. If you are impacted in a

negative way during the workshop, we will stop the focus group activities and I will listen to what you need to do in order to feel safe and comfortable.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

This research will allow for invaluable oral histories to be collected - a history that is in need of safeguarding. Audiovisual materials will be developed to ensure the preservation of the community's history for future generations and contribute to the self-understanding of individuals within the community as belonging to Canada's heritage. Exhibitions and publications of this research will unfold in community spaces and in mainstream institutions to mobilize knowledge nationally and globally, encouraging new approaches to migrant archives while working towards the further preservation of Jamaican diasporic history. If you have donated materials, documentary donations will be made accessible to you through the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC) and a selection will also be digitized and/or printed for your own personal use.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future. You will receive a digital copy of the footage as well as an honorarium of \$150.00. If you stop participating, you will still be eligible to receive the \$150 honorarium for agreeing to be in the project, even if you withdraw without completion of the research. In the event you withdraw from the project, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. If you choose to waive confidentiality, You will be asked to state your name at the beginning of your recorded interview (audio only or video).

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

The identifiable and/or anonymous data, collected in the form of handwritten notes, audiovisual recordings and/or transcripts. Your data will be stored indefinitely because of its intrinsic archival value at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC) at York University Libraries after research is completed. Any information that can identify you will remain confidential unless confidentiality is waived. Data for which explicit confidentiality is waived will be available to the community and researchers from around the world through the CTASC. The researcher will discuss and record access restrictions on the data provided by the individual participant and negotiate restrictions to data access with the CTASC. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

The data will be stored indefinitely because of its intrinsic archival value at the Clara Thomas Archives at York University after future research is completed. The data collected in this research project may be used in an anonymized form by members of the research team in subsequent research investigations exploring similar lines of inquiry. Such projects will still undergo ethics review by the HPRC, our institutional REB. Any secondary use of anonymized data by the research team will be treated with the same degree of confidentiality and anonymity as in the original research project.

Recordings (audio/video) will be saved in a password protected file to research team members' local computer, not the cloud-based service.

Please note that it is the expectation that participants agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the content of a meeting / data collection session.”

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at drebanks@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Janine Marchessault by email at jmarches@yorku.ca.

You may also contact the Graduate Program in Cinema and Media Studies by email at filmgpa@yorku.ca or by telephone at 416-736-2100 ext 2217.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Director, Research Ethics in the Office of Research Ethics, 3rd Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent to participate in *Caribbean Jamaican Diasporic Counter-Archives: Performative Archival Imaginings and Memory Making* conducted by Debbie Ebanks Schlums. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____

Date _____

Participant

Signature _____

Date _____

Principal Investigator

Additional consent:

1. Audio recording

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

1. Video recording

I _____ consent to the use of images of me (including video and other moving images), my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles	N	Y
In print, digital and slide form	N	Y
In academic presentations	N	Y
In media	N	Y
In thesis materials	N	Y

2. Photographs

I _____ consent to the use of images of me, my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles	N	Y
In print, digital and slide form	N	Y
In academic presentations	N	Y
In media	N	Y
In thesis materials	N	Y

3. Consent to waive anonymity

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

4. Consent to data deposit

I understand that my identifiable data will be placed into an archives at the York University Libraries. Y / N

5. Consent to use of quotes

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

Informed Consent Form—Interviews

Date:

Study Name: Jamaican Diasporic Archives: Performative Archival Imaginings and Memory Making

Researcher name:

Debbie Ebanks Schlums
PhD Candidate, Cinema and Media Studies
York University
Principal Investigator
Supervisor: Dr. Janine Marchessault
drebanks@yorku.ca

Purpose of the Research:

The purpose of this research-creation project is to make a participatory audio-visual archive of the Jamaican Diaspora in southern Ontario. If there are artifacts or documents participants wish to preserve for the public, I will work with the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections to ensure these materials are carefully appraised, described, and preserved in their collection. I will work with a trained archivist, to ensure the archiving process meets professional standards and advise on best practices to preserve archives at home.

The research will culminate in an interactive media installation for which participants' input will inform the design and suggestions incorporated where possible. The media installation will have projectors, screens, and speakers that viewers may activate to display audiovisual recordings from the research. There may be exhibitions, educational tours, class and conference presentations, a dissertation, and publications.

What You Will Be Asked to Do in the Research:

You will engage in a one-on-one interview with the researcher, Debbie Ebanks Schlums in person or remotely. You will be asked to relate your own personal, family, or community oral history in response to a set of questions which will be recorded on video and/or audio.

You will be asked for your consent throughout the process.

You will be expected to participate for approximately 3 hours.

Risks and Discomforts:

Though low-risk, memory recollection and the telling of oral histories may stir up an array of emotions. You may skip or refuse to answer any questions that make them uncomfortable. If you are impacted in a negative way during the interview, we will stop the interview and I will listen to what you need to do in order to feel safe and comfortable.

Benefits of the Research and Benefits to You:

This research will allow for invaluable oral histories to be collected - a history that is in need of safeguarding. Audiovisual materials will be developed to ensure the preservation of the community's history for future generations and contribute to the self-understanding of individuals within the community as belonging to Canada's heritage. Exhibitions and publications of this research will unfold in community spaces and in mainstream institutions to mobilize knowledge nationally and globally, encouraging new approaches to migrant archives while working towards the further preservation of Jamaican diasporic history. If you have donated materials, documentary donations will be made

accessible to you through the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC) and a selection will also be digitized and/or printed for your own personal use.

Voluntary Participation and Withdrawal: Your participation in the study is completely voluntary and you may choose to stop participating at any time. Your decision not to volunteer, to stop participating, or to refuse to answer particular questions will not influence the nature of the ongoing relationship you may have with the researchers or the nature of your relationship with York University either now, or in the future. You will receive a digital copy of the footage as well as an honorarium of \$75.00. If you stop participating, you will still be eligible to receive the \$75 honorarium for agreeing to be in the project, even if you withdraw without completion of the research. In the event you withdraw from the project, all associated data collected will be immediately destroyed wherever possible. Should you wish to withdraw after the study, you will have the option to also withdraw your data up until the analysis is complete.

Confidentiality:

All information you supply during the research will be held in confidence and unless you specifically indicate your consent, your name will not appear in any report or publication of the research. If you choose to waive confidentiality, you will be asked to state your name at the beginning of your recorded interview (audio only or video).

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

The identifiable and/or anonymous data, collected in the form of handwritten notes, audiovisual recordings and/or transcripts. Your data will be stored indefinitely because of its intrinsic archival value at the Clara Thomas Archives and Special Collections (CTASC) at York University Libraries after research is completed. Any information that can identify you will remain confidential unless confidentiality is waived. Data for which explicit confidentiality is waived will be available to the community and researchers from around the world through the CTASC. The researcher will discuss and record access restrictions on the data provided by the individual participant and negotiate restrictions to data access with the CTASC. Confidentiality will be provided to the fullest extent possible by law.

The data will be stored indefinitely because of its intrinsic archival value at the Clara Thomas Archives at York University after future research is completed. The data collected in this research project may be used in an anonymized form by members of the research team in subsequent research investigations exploring similar lines of inquiry. Such projects will still undergo ethics review by the HPRC, our institutional REB. Any secondary use of anonymized data by the research team will be treated with the same degree of confidentiality and anonymity as in the original research project

This study will use Zoom to collect data, which is an externally hosted cloud-based service. When information is transmitted over the internet privacy cannot be guaranteed. There is always a risk your responses may be intercepted by a third party (e.g., government agencies, hackers). Further, while York University researchers will not collect or use IP addresses or other information which could link your participation to your computer or electronic devices without informing you, there is a small risk with any platform such as this of data that is collected on external servers falling outside the control of the research team. If you are concerned about this, we would be happy to make alternative arrangements (where possible) for you to participate, perhaps via telephone. Please contact the researcher for further information.

Recordings (audio/video) will be saved in a password protected file to research team members' local computer, not the cloud-based service.

Please note that it is the expectation that participants agree not to make any unauthorized recordings of the content of a meeting / data collection session.”

Questions About the Research? If you have questions about the research in general or about your role in the study, please feel free to contact me at drebanks@yorku.ca or my supervisor, Dr. Janine Marchessault by email at jmarches@yorku.ca.

You may also contact the Graduate Program in Cinema and Media Studies by email at filmgpa@yorku.ca or by telephone at 416-736-2100 ext 2217.

This research has received ethics review and approval by the Delegated Ethics Review Committee, which is delegated authority to review research ethics protocols by the Human Participants Review Sub-Committee, York University's Ethics Review Board, and conforms to the standards of the Canadian Tri-Council Research Ethics guidelines. If you have any questions about this process, or about your rights as a participant in the study, please contact the Director, Research Ethics in the Office of Research Ethics, 3rd Floor, Kaneff Tower, York University (e-mail ore@yorku.ca).

Legal Rights and Signatures:

I _____ consent to participate in Caribbean *Jamaican Diasporic Counter-Archives: Performative Archival Imaginings and Memory Making* conducted by Debbie Ebanks Schlums. I have understood the nature of this project and wish to participate. I am not waiving any of my legal rights by signing this form. My signature below indicates my consent.

Signature _____

Date _____

Participant

Signature _____

Date _____

Principal Investigator

Additional consent:

2. Audio recording

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

6. Video recording

I _____ consent to the use of images of me (including video and other moving images), my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles	N	Y
In print, digital and slide form	N	Y
In academic presentations	N	Y
In media	N	Y
In thesis materials	N	Y

7. Photographs

I _____ consent to the use of images of me, my environment and property in the following ways (please check all that apply):

In academic articles	N	Y
In print, digital and slide form	N	Y
In academic presentations	N	Y
In media	N	Y
In thesis materials	N	Y

8. Consent to waive anonymity

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

9. Consent to data deposit

I understand that my de-identified data will be placed into an archives at the York University Libraries. Y / N

10. Consent to use of quotes

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

APPENDIX F

Abstract for the Heritage Singers Fonds

This file contains newspaper clippings that follow the rise of the Heritage Singers in Toronto and internationally. The Heritage Singers were founded in 1977 by Grace Carter-Henry Lyons to share traditional Caribbean folk songs. These clippings start in 1983 and continue to 2009 as they cover the increase in numbers and popularity of the Heritage Singers, which started as only a few friends sharing songs they missed from the Caribbean and grew to a group of 30 people at some points, promoting Caribbean culture across the globe. The group consisted of members from all over the Caribbean and Canada and was headed by their musical director and founder, Grace Carter-Henry Lyons. They performed traditional folk songs, storytelling, dances, and pantomimes across Canada and internationally, including events in the United States, Europe, and even at Nan Ying International Folklore Festival in Taiwan in 1998. They performed Jamaican and other Caribbean folk songs to promote the variety of Caribbean culture, as they wanted to make other aspects of Caribbean performance known and popular beyond calypso and reggae music. These clippings include reviews of and promotions for their many performances at charity events, festivals, competitions, and more.

This file contains mostly newspaper clippings and memorabilia from two pantomime performances staged in Toronto by the Little Theatre Movement/National Pantomime Company of Jamaica. This file also contains a few newspaper clippings of reviews of the Heritage Singers' own performances. The pantomime production of *Augus Mawnin* was performed by the Little Theatre Movement in Jamaica and the troupe was hosted in Toronto by the Heritage Singers to perform the pantomime for Black History Month. The story of enslaved people running away to hear the news of emancipation was considered a fitting performance for Black History Month celebrations in 2002. The Little Theatre Movement then brought their production of *Miss Annie* to Toronto in 2003 for a nearly sold-out night. A comedic take on a traditional Jamaican ghost story of a woman who kills her four husbands due to her greed was heavily advertised in Toronto newspapers and was positively reviewed in newspapers after the performance. These pantomime productions were considered a good way to share a uniquely Jamaican take on the British production style with Toronto audiences, where instead of miming, the productions contain much singing, dancing, and talking to get the story across to the audience. This file also contains signs, photos, handouts, and other memorabilia from both the *Augus Mawnin* and the *Miss Annie* productions.

This file contains newspaper clippings that are celebrations of Grace Carter-Henry Lyons's personal achievements. There are articles celebrating several awards and achievements Lyons earned in her life and career. She was a real estate agent for over 20 years and won awards for her work, such as Homelife's Who's Who Award and an acknowledgement for being among the top 100 sales representatives across the nation in Homelife/5 Star Realty. In 2002 she received the Black Business and Professional Association's Harry Jerome Award for Business Excellence, and in 2003 she received the African-Canadian Achievement Award for Single Parent of the Year. She is celebrated as an active member of her community and many articles note her founding of the Heritage Singers and how they have worked to spread Caribbean culture and raise funds for many charities. She studied piano and voice at the Royal School of Music and Trinity School of Music, respectively, in addition to studying at the University of Toronto and York University. She is praised for mixing her business, educational, personal, and cultural success in her life, being a high achiever in all these aspects of her life, and for using this success to give back to the community.