

**TRANSFORMING CURATORIAL PRACTICE: ENVISIONING AND NOURISHING
ETHICAL-CREATIVE-ARCHIVAL ECOLOGIES OF CONNECTEDNESS**

by

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A THESIS SUBMITTED IN PARTIAL FULFILLMENT OF
THE REQUIREMENTS FOR THE DEGREE OF

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY

in

THE FACULTY OF GRADUATE AND POSTDOCTORAL STUDIES
(Interdisciplinary Studies)

THE UNIVERSITY OF BRITISH COLUMBIA
(Vancouver)

October 2013

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Abstract

In my dissertation, I uniquely and through sustained public reasoning develop a rationale and vision for curation as an ethic of care and connectedness responsive to the transformative and ethical power and potential of creativity. I envision and illuminate my ethical re/membering and re/orienting of curation beyond the dictates of the artworld-academic post/industrial complex while critically and creatively addressing many of its narratives, practices and formations. I delineate connectedness as reverence for creative-archival intelligence and preciousness of our shared humanity with the earth and cosmos—all life. Through connectedness as an ethic and framework, I open up the experiential and epistemic bases of curation, from artworld and scientism-shaped grounds of thought to narratives of culture and technology.

I illuminate curatorial processes and relations pertaining to internal journeying, relations with others, and the earth, inclusive of and going far beyond museological and art historical concerns, by expanding contexts and modes of personal and social cognition of creativity, culture, and archiving. This illumination is achieved by holding together participatory understandings of consciousness and ethics and interrelational conceptions of creativity and archiving. Experientially connective ecologies of creativity, culture, and archiving are explored to elaborate the world-involving, embodied bases of cognition, and how materiality, empiricism, emotions and value are entangled.

I clarify the intersections of science as a lens of modernity and hegemonic notions of archiving to make the case that opening up delineations of science, ethically and epistemologically, is as integral to transformative curatorial practice as the rethinking of culture in integrative and connective terms. My grounding of science within human experience and thus

value and the elaboration of the moral agency of the body and senses grids my elaboration of meaningful connection between modes and forms of archiving, scientific and artistic, psychic and physical, including key constructs utilized to understand and shape knowledges. In making a case for emotionally healthy, sensuously alive, intellectually non-coercive creative-ethical-archival ecologies, I correlatively develop a vision-practice of curation as a transformative ethic of care. Such an ethic affirms learning and growth, purpose and passion, connection and responsibility.

Preface

This dissertation is my original and independent work. Parts of a version of Chapter 2 have been published: Rajdeep Singh Gill, “Ethical Re/orientings and Re/memberings of Curatorial Practice,” in *Integration and Resistance in the Global Era: Theoretical Event of the Tenth Havana Biennial*, ed. Dannys Montes de Oca Moreda (Havana: Centro de Arte Contemporáneo Wilfredo Lam, 2009): 99-107 and 373-380 & Rajdeep Singh Gill, “Ethical Re/orientings and Re/memberings of Curatorial Practice,” *FUSE Magazine*, 29.4 (2006): 15-21. Parts of a version of Chapter 4 have also been published: Rajdeep Singh Gill, “Alternate Ontologies and Epistemologies of Archiving and the Politics of Self-determination,” *Researchers and Academics of Colour for Equity/Equality Link*, 5 (2006): 6-13. I was responsible for the research and writing pertaining to the above-mentioned publications.

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List of Abbreviations

UBINIG	Unnayan Bikalper Nitinirdharoni Gobeshona (Policy Research for Development Alternative)
FINNRAGE	Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering
SANFEC	South Asian Network on Food, Ecology, and Culture

Acknowledgements

I would like to warmly acknowledge and thank the Coast Salish peoples whose territories I reside on and create from.

I would like to express my gratitude to Fabiola Nabil Naguib, my fabulous wife, radiant partner in life, love, and work. Fabiola, my humsafar and farishta, without your unconditional love and support, your creative and intellectual inspiration, your phenomenal editing, and your unwavering faith in me, I never could have persisted and completed this thesis. I do not have words to express my gratitude for your patience, brilliance, and generosity, day in and day out.

My appreciation and thanks also go to other members of my family for their unique and diverse contributions to my doctoral journey: my parents, Harinder and Sukhjinder Gill, my mother-in-law, Helga Naguib, Gogi Massiji and Parveen Masarji, and Naniji and Nanaji. I extend my heartfelt gratitude to all of you.

Barbara Binns has been a most supportive friend. Barbara, thank you for your deep care for Fabiola and I, including my doctoral success. Your generosity of spirit is keenly felt and appreciated. Thank you for being part of our life, you are so dear to us.

I would like to acknowledge the support I have received from my department, the Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program (ISGP). Both the former chair of the program John Beatty and its current chair Hillel Goelman have provided encouragement, support, and opportunities I can only describe as phenomenal. I could not imagine having a more positive experience in a PhD program.

Hillel, the opportunities and support you provided—from teaching and curriculum development to scholarships and exchange—have considerably enriched my doctoral experience. Your expansive support, thoughtfulness and compassion during my doctoral process are deeply appreciated. I also deeply respect the care and consideration you activate and I am inspired by it. Thank you for everything.

John, thank you for being so encouraging of my rethinking of curatorial responsibility and giving me the amazing chance to try out my ideas and arguments by teaching on my doctoral dissertation topic. Your warmth, support and enthusiasm continue to be deeply appreciated.

Dana Claxton has been a most generous and supportive research supervisor. I could not have asked for a more amazing person and cosmopolitan thinker to be on this journey with me. My heartfelt and abundant gratitude to you, thank you!

June McCue, my longest serving committee member, has been incredibly gracious and encouraging. June, your care, expansive thinking, and commitment to my project are deeply appreciated. You were a dream to have on my committee! Thank you so much for your thoughtful way of being in the world.

More recently, Daniel Heath Justice generously agreed to join my committee despite having a more than full plate and a packed schedule. Daniel, I am most grateful for your time, effort and support. Thank you also for your openness and warmth!

I would like to express my immense gratitude to Marie Battiste for the care, generosity and depth with which she engaged with my dissertation in her capacity as my external examiner. It felt so rewarding to have my scholarship engaged with such rigour and insight, thank you.

I would also like to extend a big thank you to Peter Cole and Jennifer Kramer for being such responsive and engaged university examiners. It was such a pleasure to dialogue and exchange with both of you.

I would like to thank my initial committee members Sunera Thobani and Jennifer Chan for their support in the earlier part of my degree. My gratitude also goes to Rita Wong for stepping in as a committee member during a transitional period. A big thank you to all of you!

I would like to express my gratitude to Janice Matautia, administrator at ISGP for a considerable portion of my doctoral studies. Janice, thank you for providing such kind and thorough assistance on matters small and big. You brought such friendliness and peace of mind to my doctoral experience.

Ben Pollard, Director, Vice President Students Portfolio Initiatives, UBC, went far beyond the call of duty to assist me during an incredibly stressful and difficult time. Ben, I cannot thank you enough for your kindness, efforts, and advocacy.

I would also like to acknowledge Kaycie Hebert, Lisa Johannesen, and Brendan Morey at UBC for their kind assistance.

I would like to acknowledge and thank the funders of my doctoral research: Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation, Interdisciplinary Studies Graduate Program, Asa Singh and Kashmir Kaur Johal, and the University of British Columbia.

I would like to thank all my students at Emily Carr University, University of British Columbia, and University of the Fraser Valley. Journeying with you was a tremendous privilege and experience. Teaching considerably enriched my research and thinking and kept restoring my faith in the need and purpose of my project and ideas.

I would like to especially thank Arlene Cotter for her multifaceted support of my pedagogy as well as research. Arlene, your kindness and generosity are warmly appreciated.

Meeting Ursula Franklin was one of my most resonant experiences as a Trudeau Scholar. Thank you Ursula for your intellectual and moral example and inspiration, and valuable practical advice during crucial times in my PhD.

I would also like to thank Sylvia Hamilton, my Trudeau Mentor, for arranging and sponsoring my doctoral research related talk at Dalhousie Art Gallery and King's College, Halifax. I extend my gratitude to Catherine Martin (Mi'kmaq) for welcoming me there. I am also grateful for having many other opportunities to share my ideas and exchange with others at Trudeau seminars and public events.

I extend my gratitude to all the people who kindly invited me to speak at various conferences, symposiums, and seminars over the years. Each opportunity to publically share, reflect, and exchange assisted me in developing my ideas.

Farida Akhter and Farhad Mazhar facilitated travel to and within Bangladesh. Thank you for generously welcoming and hosting Fabiola and I, and opening up the work of UBINIG to us. A warm thank you for the kindness, sharing and hardwork of UBINIG staff at Dhaka, Ishwardi, and Kushtia.

My last two acknowledgments are also extremely important to my heart and journey.

Maya and Kisha, our beloved family members, crossed over during the last part of my doctorate. Thank you for being such amazing furry companions, I learned a lot regarding heart and loyalty, joy and sweetness, sensitivity and spunk from both of you. Maya and Kisha, you remind me of what is important in life. I miss you both dearly and feel profoundly blessed to have had you in my life.

The life-sustaining solace, nurturance and beauty of the Earth have been vital to my journey and I feel grateful beyond words.

In memory of Maya

In memory of Kisha

To the Earth

To Fabiola

shining star full of the deepest love and vision, blessing to the earth, my beloved

Chapter 1: Laying the Ground: Introduction to Research Process and Key Thematic and Methodological Concepts and Positions

Everything you need to learn can be found for free, in close observation of your relationships with the earth, with each other, and with yourselves.

—Chrystos¹

...it is necessary to teach by living and speaking those truths which we believe and know beyond understanding. Because in this way alone we can survive, by taking part in a process of life that is creative and continuing, that is growth.

—Audre Lorde²

This introductory chapter focuses on the concepts and frameworks that anchor my theoretical and methodological outlook and activations. The ways in which I consciously inhabit re/search and knowledge-making is intricately linked to how I perceive, experience, and relate internally, interpersonally, and with the world around me. My development of the concept-practice of transformative curation is deeply shaped by my experiential and social awareness of the participatory nature of knowledge and understanding, ethics and justice.

The participatory element in my dissertation includes engagement with plural histories, disciplines, and worldviews; my research process and motivations; the academic & community

¹ Chrystos, Plenary Address. Creating Change Conference, The National Gay and Lesbian Task Force, 5 Feb. 2011. Youtube. Mar. 17, 2011.

² Audre Lorde, "Transformation of Silence into Language and Action," in *Sister Outsider* (Berkeley: Crossing Press, 1984): 43.

contexts and conversations in which I have been active; the various opportunities and sites for learning and exchange; as well as the active, dialogic communication of what I have gathered through my journeying.

I am an integrative thinker and I find that the connections I forge converge from numerous directions and move outward in as many! I have sculpted the introduction in a manner that is in some measure closer to my creative-critical process of making sense of the world. The “what, why, and how” of my thesis is conveyed in a manner more like a painting: my thoughts, arguments, and directions are developed in layers that overlap; there are differently hued though interconnected perspectives in each section.

1.1 From a Disquieting to Re/membering: The Germination of My Vision-Practice

The germination of my transformative curatorial vision as well as my critique of sanctioned curatorial terrains is rooted in deeply felt knowings, cultivated by a myriad of experiences that include and go beyond those as an educator, curator, and scholar. Ironically, growing up, I never visited museums and galleries, dominantly constructed as key sites of curatorial activity focused on art and archival engagement, including conservation, exhibition, and interpretation. And until reaching university, I was unaware that the discipline of art history, which enjoys a powerful correlative role to curatorial endeavors, even existed. Since then I have received “appropriate” art historical and curatorial cognitive training and socialization. However, the strangeness of museums and institutional art spaces, of how I initially felt not at home in these spaces and rarely compelled to visit them, has in some ways remained with me, and grown stronger within specific contexts and practices. My experiences in the context of my academic

training, teaching and curatorial endeavours³ have been crucial to solidifying my discernment of what is significantly amiss in the art historical, critical, and curatorial practices that shape the academia-artworld post/industrial complex.⁴ These rich kernels of experience and their subsequently intensive and reflective integration have assisted me in realizing and articulating that in spite of the heterogeneity of dynamics that make up the curatorial, academic, and broader community interfaces, as well as valuable vision-practices that can encompass some of its landscapes, something structurally disquieting is at hand. I have personally and professionally reflected on this disquieting for many years, publically discussed it with colleagues and finally decided that exploring and honing my intuitive, commonsense and integrative grasping were no longer an impulse or reactive, they were simply a necessity in making sense of and being accountable within these terrains.

I have become attentive to and cognizant of the consequential role the artworld-academia post/industrial complex plays in dislocating or disconnecting people from their own knowing and creative power and potential. I do not view this dislocation or disconnection as an isolated phenomenon. It connects with a wider societal dynamic based on notions of exclusivity of expertise and related practices of gate-keeping that have, as scientist and activist Ursula Franklin

³ The relational-experiential ground from which my reflections and critique of the artworld-academia post/industrial complex stem include: a two-year curatorial residency at the Vancouver Art Gallery; independent curatorial work; exchanges with and presentation for the Equity Office in the Visual Arts section of the Canada Council for the Arts; art historical training and engagement as a humanities scholar; teaching and exchange with hundreds of artists as an educator at Emily Carr University of Art and Design and in my project travels.

⁴ I am letting the descriptive-analytic phrase “artworld-academia post/industrial complex” remain primarily suggestive here. In the next chapter, I lay out in some detail how academia and the artworld intersect and develop further what I imply by the post/industrial complex.

argues, “dramatically lessened the confidence of people in the astuteness of their own senses.”⁵ On the surface, it may appear that the arts and culture arena is more critically engaged than the status-quo spheres of science that Franklin views as a major contributor to the increasing lack of people’s reliance on “their own direct experience,” what “they sense, feel, and hear.”⁶ I will argue in this thesis that creativity is a profound aspect of experiential-relational knowing and by domesticating, hierarchizing, and gatekeeping creativity, the artworld-academia post/industrial complex often perpetuates a similar disconnect. As the arts and culture arena is often associated by many of its practitioners, supporters, as well as institutional players with an abiding sense of dissent and progressiveness, dislocating dynamics actually occur under substantive obscuring, unconceded complicity and/or complacency. I bear witness to the assuming and policing aspects of many key critical narratives and terrains of the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. Positing a vibrant alternative to these dynamics deeply motivates my independently minded and spirited charting of the interrelationship of creativity, archiving, ethics, and just co-existence. My aim in creating a transformative vision-concept-practice⁷ of curation is to contributively encourage, cultivate, and nourish a vastly more open connection to creativity as a decentralized, transformative commons of human and non-human knowledge, criticality, resilience, and mutual flourishing.

My disquieting sense of the artworld terrain resonates with Malidoma Patrice Somé’s reflection that collecting art objects and museumizing them may reflect an unquenched thirst for

⁵ See Ursula Franklin, “Reflections on Science and the Citizen,” in *Pacifism as a Map: The Ursula Franklin Reader*, ed. Michelle Swenarchuk (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2006): 315.

⁶ Ibid.

⁷ I deploy vision-concept-practice as a conjoined phrase as I view these elements as deeply intertwined. I explore their interrelationship in detail in the following chapter.

spirit as well as a community in crisis.⁸ Somé describes the urge for collecting and storing art as the “longing for the sacred” in a “place of struggle.”⁹ His reflections affirm ponderings that have stirred within me for years; I often wonder if art and creativity have come to extensively need or revolve around a museum, this may not imply a celebratory elevation of creativity or creative practice but may be more a symptom of creativity being increasingly disconnected from the fabric of community and everyday life. I also carry a growing understanding of creativity as an essential aspect of how we richly experience consciousness and interact with its transformative bases and potential. Creativity animates the web of life. When Somé invokes the sacred, he is also referring to a broader perceptual and experiential field of creativity, the workings of the natural world that also carry mystery, and generate awe and wonder.¹⁰ My social observation is that the dis/membering of a holistic process and sense of creativity within the artworld-academia post/industrial complex is shaped by personal, social and epistemic entrenchment in capital and coloniality. In my thesis, I map the contours of the conceptual absence and practical obscuring of

⁸ See Malidoma Patrice Somé, *The Healing Wisdom of Africa: Finding Life Purpose Through Nature, Ritual, and Community* (New York: Jeremy P. Tarcher/Putnam, 1999): 96-97. Somé’s reflections are rooted in the Dagara worldview and form part of a compassionate yet sharp critique of dominant modern-global society. Somé’s effort and vision includes articulating how Dagara wisdom shares ground with other traditions of wisdom and may be meaningful to the task of healing across contexts. Healing is contextualized as a collective endeavour involving all of humanity.

⁹ Ibid. , 96.

¹⁰ Ibid. , 95-97. Somé also describes the sacred as the world of Spirit within and beyond the world of matter. It is interesting to note that in dominant traditions of science, matter is also no longer seen to be a simple and given basic. In 20th century science, “the dividing lines between matter, energy, and pure space evaporated,” Theodore Roszak in *The Voice of the Earth* (New York: Simon and Schuster, 1992) details, allowing for mathematical dealings with matter but with scientists now having to acknowledge lack of comprehensions of “its [matter’s] capacities and limits” (105; 106). Roszak questions science’s continued physicalist paradigm in lieu of the dissolving of matter through scientific observation, wherein it is no longer possible to “say ‘spirit’ is other than ‘matter,’ let alone antagonistic to it” (106).

a broader, human and nonhuman, ethically responsive, connective fabric of creativity both within the artworld-academia post/industrial complex and dominant-modern societal structuring.

I experience the sacred as reverence for creative-archival intelligence and the preciousness of our shared humanity with the earth and cosmos—all life.¹¹ Dismembering in part or full of such experiential reverence—disconnection—is a widespread internalized as well as outwardly encouraged dynamic and logic of dissociation within hegemonic sociopolitical spheres. I first became awakened to the profound relationship between disconnection and environmental degradation, colonialism, socio-economic inequity, patriarchy and other downpressions¹² through the clear-eyed thinking and practice of artist, writer, and activist Fabiola Nabil Naguib. Naguib and I have been partners in life and work for over a decade, and bearing witness to and learning from her integrative worldview and analysis and her holding together of the correlations between heart-connection and justice as well as creativity and resilience have radically contributed to the transformation of my curatorial perceptions and values. Naguib argues that disconnection is often one of the root causes of injustice rather than

¹¹ The sacred relates to the everyday, to being radically receptive to learning, and to making ethics central to living. In no way do I seek to invoke the sacred as a call for lack of reflection and scrutiny, knowledge and understanding. The mystery I see as part of the sacred comes from humility in knowing how little we know of the cosmos, and that intelligence, value, and creativity cannot be reductively explained. For a succinct critique of the philosophical and empirical unsoundness of physicalist reductionism as an explanation for consciousness and value, see Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos: Why the Materialist Neo-Darwinian Conception of Nature is Almost Certainly False* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2012).

¹² “Downpression” is a Rastafarian expression I learned from Althea Prince, *Being Black* (Toronto: Insomniac Press, 2001). The term was adopted to reflect that oppression does not lift you “opp” (same as “up” in Jamaican patois) but holds you down. I appreciate the palpable nature of the expression.

any particular –ism being the “initial catalyst.”¹³ Naguib characterizes connectedness as *conscious* relationship to the sacredness of all human and non-human relations, involving “becoming, being, and staying connected to our hearts, spirits, and the realities of others....”¹⁴ Connectedness, defined in such a manner, is imperative to my rethinking of curation given that it contains a strong call for deepening personal response-ability and accountability in all aspects of relationship, including perception, imagination, motivation, and action. Inhabiting response-ability and accountability expands awareness of choices, illuminating possibilities for the activation of creativity in relationship. This awareness provides opportunities for sustaining of other-regarding transformative evaluations and commitments such as care, humility, love, and compassion, which I shall discuss in the chapters ahead as integral creative and archival “together-doings.”¹⁵ I thus imagine curation, not primarily as a museological or arthistorical

¹³ See Fabiola Bahiyya Nabil Naguib, “Roots of Racism,” in *Uninhabiting the Violence of Silencing: Activations of Creativity, Ethics, and Resistance* (Coast Salish Territories: Creativity Commons Collective and Press, 2007): 74.

¹⁴ Ibid. , 75. It is interesting to note the strong intersection between Naguib’s and Somé’s thoughts on healing. In “Roots of Racism,” Naguib comments, “I believe that healing is the activation of connectedness, becoming connected, and this is not only a right but a fundamental responsibility to oneself, others, and the planet” (75). The intersection between Naguib’s and Somé’s work demonstrates the points I will argue in the pages ahead—of how knowledge is a commons and that we can come to substantive shared understanding from very diverse histories and locations.

¹⁵ “Together-doing” is a clear and expressive term coined by scholar Jack Forbes (Powhatan-Renape, Delaware-Lenape) to provide a dynamic, grounded alternative to static, bounded, and hyperabstract conceptions of culture. See Jack Forbes, “Nature and Culture: Problematic Concepts for Native Americans,” in *Indigenous Traditions and Ecology: The Interbeing of Cosmology and Community*, ed., John A. Grim (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000). *Jack D. Forbes*. University of California, Davis, n.d. Web.10 Jan. 2010. PDF File. I find the term together-doing evocative, reflective, and relevant and explain in some detail why I deploy it in Chapter 3, “Curatorial Responsibility and the Imagination of Culture.”

enterprise, but as a planetary concept-vision-practice grounded in the commitment to nourishing ethical-creative-archival ecologies of connectedness.

1.2 Contextualizing Ontology and Epistemology in Relationship: Cognitive Plurality and Mutual Flourishing

The concepts of ontology and epistemology are central to my thesis. In this section, I contextualize my specific understanding and activation of these concepts, and how the recognition of their plurality (cognitive plurality) is essential to a genuinely open creative and archival relational process—an ethically re/membered curatorial endeavour of mutual flourishing.

The re/membering of curation within an ethic of connectedness is an ontological and epistemological expansion of its terrains, and thus of how creativity and archiving may be re/imagined and inhabited. The interrelationship of ontology and epistemology implies that our understandings, activations, and nourishing of creativity and archiving are shaped by imaginations of our sense of self, community, and the wider world (ontology), in turn affecting what we view as knowledge and how we come to acquire and live it (epistemology). I view philosophy as an everyday task, an imaginative, reflective, and practical navigation of the varied contours of life and its diverse relational networks. My understanding of the constructs of ontology and epistemology emerges from this outlook, and embraces the individual and collective diversity of ways of being and knowing.

I am aware that the idea of ontology carries heavy baggage in the so-called western philosophical traditions.¹⁶ For example, Hilary Putnam in *Ethics without Ontology* makes a case against a particular history and vision of capital O Ontology that seeks to provide a universalist explanation that is exclusive, “the ‘science of Being’”¹⁷ in which “the *world* dictates a unique ‘true’ way of dividing the world into objects, situations, properties, etc.,....”¹⁸ Within such a worldview, an a priori “true” division, Putnam explains, may be applied to “objects” ranging from compassion to a scientific theorem.¹⁹ I agree with Putnam’s challenging of the Ontological reduction of the world into exclusive, fundamental aspects, experientially gathering how no such aspects can really be purported to already exist in the world prior to position, perception, relation, activation, or context. Putnam argues that it is far more helpful and necessary to pay serious attention to the diversity and context of the pragmatic-conceptual thinking activated in everyday life and in different imaginative communities.²⁰ I connect with these insights from my

¹⁶ I often find partitions of knowledge, geography, or communities as exclusively western or non-western largely unhelpful or inaccurate. Firstly, there has been and is a strong transcontinental and transcultural flows of thoughts, ideas, labor, and peoples that shape much of what is seen as or claimed as “western”—from Greek thought to digital computers. As well, many stereotypical ways of seeing particular values as western (“individuality”) and non-western (“collectivism”) do not hold up to critical scrutiny. These renderings misrepresent huge strains of thought and practice across societies within a grossly generalizing conception of west and east. As well, European countries and euro-settler colonies on Turtle Island are far more than merely “western”—from incredible diversity and range of Indigenous communities and nations to the transformative presence and contribution of non-european peoples that form a key fabric of these societies, whether acknowledged or denied.

¹⁷ Hilary Putnam, *Ethics without Ontology* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004): 17.

¹⁸ Ibid. , 51.

¹⁹ See specifically Putnam, “Objectivity without Objects,” in *Ethics without Ontology*, 52-70.

²⁰ Ibid. , 21 and 33. Putnam deploys three particular terms to discuss the diversity of conceptual thinking and practice—pragmatic pluralism, conceptual relativity involving conventional relativity but cognitive equivalence, and conceptual pluralism. He defines pragmatic pluralism as “the recognition that it is no accident that in everyday language we employ many different kinds of discourses, discourses subject to

interrelational, participatory, and situational understanding of how we flexibly and richly navigate life. Within my framework, for instance, care and compassion and/or science and empiricism, as will become evident in the pages ahead, are not detached truths or truths outside of self and community—they are specific and active processes of personal and social cognition, not a description of reality but rather its particular making. Putnam comes to his sensitive and incisive conclusions within the context of the academic discipline of philosophy and I have come to concurring recognitions from years of reflective processing on knowledge and reality.²¹ In my explorations I thus invoke ontology with a small o, describing the diverse ways we as individuals, part of a whole range of imaginative communities, navigate and activate self and reality, with facts, beliefs, conventions, and values thoroughly intertwined.²²

different standards and possessing different sorts of applications, with different logical and grammatical features....” (21-22). Putnam elaborates on conceptual relativity as the recognition that “our empirical knowledge, or any piece of it, is conventional relative to certain alternatives, and factual relative to certain others” (45)—alternately described as different extensions of ordinary notions (49). Last but not the least, he describes conceptual pluralism as how we can use different schemes that do not carry equivalence to describe the same “object” “without being required to reduce one or both of them to some single fundamental and universal ontology” (49).

²¹ Putnam and I share an outlook that I would describe as a participatory versus representational understanding of concept-truths. For example, Putnam argues that “just as the ethically important adjectives ‘cruel’ and ‘compassionate’ describe properties that human beings may have or lack, not supernatural properties, but also not properties that one can simply perceive (or “measure”) without having understood and learned to imaginatively identify with a particular evaluative outlook, so ‘simple’ and ‘coherent’ (in their scientific applications) describe properties that certain human products, scientific theories, may have or lack, and that one cannot perceive without having understood and learned to imaginatively identify with a particular evaluative outlook” (69).

²² The entanglement of facts, conventions, and values is one of Putnam’s key philosophical arguments. The expressiveness of my thoughts here has been enriched by my encounter with his work though the understanding I explicate is something I carry with me from my own exploration and location. See Amartya Sen “Entanglements, Language, and Communication,” in *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009): 119-121 for thoughtful reflections on how ordinary language gathers

By highlighting the interrelationship of ontologies and epistemologies, I am bringing attention to the entanglement between cognitive and social aspects of creativity, archiving, ethics, and justice. For instance, if in the imagination-practice of social justice, we do not acknowledge or ethically engage with diverse individual and collective human and non-human ways of cognating and thus archiving the world, social change can become an impositional and disconnected process and endeavour. The ethical re/membering of creativity and archiving thus calls for *consciously* noticing, becoming aware, and being accountable to conceptual and cognitive plurality, a significant aspect of attention, receptivity, and care in relationship. Recognition of cognitive plurality is essential to a genuinely open creative and archival relational process—a shared curatorial endeavour of human and earth flourishing.

1.3 Ethical Ecology of Relationship: Re/Locating Interrelationships of Creativity, Archiving, and Ethics

In my thesis, creativity, archiving, and ethics are articulated, clarified, and developed in the context of particular conversations—the diverse constellations of their interrelationship are emergent from the journeys I undertake through this dissertation. The brief sketch here introduces some overall conceptions to lay ground for these explorations in the chapters to follow.

Differential, diverse, and context sensitive, the capability to consciously and creatively transform the world (personal, familial, communal, local, global), in minute as well as

meaning from socially shared conventions, which in turn makes it full of philosophical and epistemological claims and concepts.

considerable ways, is a powerful gift-ability and resource. My strong acknowledgment of this human capability²³ is coupled with the understanding that many forms of injustice negatively impact or impede it. In fact, it is my deep awareness of the value, intricacy, and richness of this capability—of its connection to human dignity and freedom—that I believe barriers to its full inhabitation need to be fiercely challenged and extracted. In my viewpoint, the transformative nature of creativity thus includes, rather than precludes, being deeply responsive to the vulnerability of our creaturehood and the interdependent nature of our flourishing.

I am inspired in my rethinking of creativity by Okanagan artist, activist, and thinker Jeanette Armstrong. She articulates a philosophy that enfolds immense power and transformation within the very understanding of creativity:

...All action has the potential of tremendous power...A word in Okanagan, *xaxa* ' refers to the meaningful essence of all creation...This word is applied to humans, as beings with the power to acknowledge and act in ways which seek to maintain the principle of harmony with creation and yet continue to make new choices for survival. We are sacred and precious. In knowing this we become *xaxa* ' , and cannot escape knowing that all life likewise is *xaxa* ' and our full creative power as humans is to know this and express this through all actions.²⁴

The imagination and activation of creativity as cognitive-social assonance with deep reverence for all life is a powerful way of connecting creativity to ethics and freedom. My view of creativity, as responsiveness to social relations and realities beyond survival and self-interest, is informed by a capacious, not idealistic, understanding-experience of human lives. As the philosopher and economist Amartya Sen richly argues, “people do have needs, but they also have

²³ Although I am focusing on human creative capabilities here, I view knowledge, creativity, and other aspects of together-doing as non-human capacities as well. My research project following this dissertation will be focused on conceptualizations and explorations of nonhuman creativity.

²⁴ See *Native Creative Process: A Collaborative Discourse between Douglas Cardinal and Jeanette Armstrong with Photographs by Greg Young-Ing* (Penticton: Theytus Books, 1991): 46.

values, and in particular, cherish their ability to reason, appraise, choose, participate and act. Seeing people only in terms of their needs may give us a rather meager view of humanity.”²⁵ The creative capacity to be able to reflect, feel, evaluate, and connect from generosity of motivation and breadth of responsibility is an essential part of human freedom. To put this capacity into action is the continuation of creative freedom.²⁶

This transformative notion of creativity is also deeply connected to archiving, which I re/imagine as the multifaceted sensing and shaping of realities by way of how we live and relate. I locate archiving in the transformative nature of reality-making—of how emotions and intellect, the individual and the collective, the spiritual and the social, the body and the world are dynamic archival fabrics woven into being and continuously weaving each other. In my thesis, I imaginatively rethink media, science, empiricism, technology, etc., from within such an archival paradigm. My re/imagining sharply contrasts with the notion or ontology of archiving as a means of documentation; rather than being located in the externalization of history and memory in

²⁵ Sen, 250. Specifically, the section, “Lives, Freedoms, and Capabilities,” in Sen’s *The Idea of Justice* played an important role in sparking further clarity in my work regarding the strong link between the pursuit of justice and the reasons that inform the pursuit of justice. This was further clarified during the opportunity to exchange with Sen during his talk and visit to the University of British Columbia on April 21, 2011.

²⁶ For example, the valuing of the indivisibility of justice not only constitutes a profound understanding of human freedom but also a powerful activation of that very freedom—to feel, think and reason expansively. Archbishop Desmond Tutu clearly and movingly articulates the indivisible nature of human flourishing:

You cannot have an apartheid prosperity. If you are going to have security, it is going to be security for all. If you are going to have prosperity, it is going to be prosperity for all. If you want to be free, you cannot have a quarantine freedom. It is going to be freedom for all. And if you want to be human, we are not going to be able to be human in isolation. It will be that we are human together.

See “The Tutu Connection,” Interview by Brad Pitt, *Vanity Fair*, July 2007, 96.

particular forms of media as well as the policing of sanction, archiving, in its most profound form, can be defined as an ethical ecology of relationship.²⁷

My understanding of ethics is expansive, as involving ways we relate to each other, conceptions of a rich and whole life, the interrelationship of individual, collective, and human good. My viewpoint on ethics shares ground with philosophers like Hilary Putnam and Timothy Chappell. Putnam's position is that "any human problem at all, insofar as it impacts our collective and individual welfare, is... 'ethical'—but it may also be at the same time aesthetic, or logical, or scientific, or just about anything else; and if we solve a problem and cannot say, at the end of the day, whether it was an 'ethical problem' in the conventional sense of the term, that is not at all a bad thing."²⁸ What I share with Putnam's framework is that I also do not atomize ethics from any activity or aspect of life. In terms of imagination-practice what makes our lives meaningful, what contributes to the goodness of an individual life, the sustaining of community, or the cultivation of our humanity carries the same kind of intricacy and complexity, interdependency and interconnection, that we associate with a flourishing, biodiverse ecological habitat. The connection I carry with Timothy Chappell's work is with regard to the ethical centrality he gives to experience. He emphasizes that "ethics...is [about] the living out of an

²⁷ For example, if I am caring towards someone, it is an archival action, and not because another person observed it or it made the news. Being caring *transforms* the world—this transformation or making of the world *is* archiving. Of course the same can be said of callousness, etc. The difference is that ethical inhabitations nourish and expand individual and collective creativity wherein the archival impact of injustice is both fragmentation and impeding of mutual flourishing. Re/membering of archiving as a *living*, ethical ecology of relationship, while carrying the capacity to illuminate the archival impact of a whole range of behaviour, forces, and relations, has the advantage of orienting justice and connection as profound archival matters. Significantly, an expansive archival outlook honors the power-full materiality of relations and responsibilities.

²⁸ Putnam, 107.

ethical outlook” in which our moral perceptions and love are central, rather than an endeavour primarily concerned with moral theory— “explanatory theories of right and wrong” that seek to be systematically “*general* and *exclusive*.”²⁹ In my framework, creativity and archiving are connected to an experiential understanding of ethics as an embodied way of leading a reflective and accountable life in a perceptually and socially dynamic world. Creativity and archiving in turn are defined as well as explored in relation to the ability to feel, gather, activate, and sustain ethical motivation, reflection, and navigation—connectedness—in varied contexts and relations.

I view being conscious or conscious living as a key aspect of ethically re/membering creativity and archiving. As theoretical physicist and thinker David Bohm argues, “...it is hard to put a new consciousness into practice because we are unconsciously in our practice...doing the opposite of what we claim we want to do. Therefore the important point is to be aware of what we are actually doing.”³⁰ Being conscious, I believe, involves radical honesty of thought and action, deep receptivity and communication. Communication, when conscious, is a transformative experience that has incredible creative potential to establish, mend, or sustain relationship.³¹ Creative power-action, based on incorporating this insight, may be more fully

²⁹ See Timothy Chappell, “Theory and Insight in Ethics,” in *Ethics and Experience: Life Beyond Moral Theory* (Durnham: Acumen Publishing, 2009): 213; 185.

³⁰ Bohm, *On Creativity*, ed. Lee Nichol (New York: Routledge, 2004): 142. Being conscious is also a way of fully acknowledging and facing, rather than dualizing or repressing, what is within and around us. This understanding resonates with certain strains of Buddhist thought. As Thich Nhat Hanh sharply elucidates, “Enlightenment cannot be found by running away from delusion. Looking deeply into the nature of delusion, we touch enlightenment” (208). See “Flower and Garbage,” in *Understanding Our Mind* (Berkeley: Parallax Press, 2006): 207-209.

³¹ The writers I experience this most powerfully with are Audre Lorde, Fabiola Nabil Naguib, and Chrystos. Each of them view and practice breaking silences and communicating as essential aspects of personal and collective responsibility. Such critical scrutiny and communicative processes are an integral aspect of justice.

described as a capacity for being personally and socially conscious, receptive-communicative, and response-able. Along related lines, deeply listening, sensitively witnessing, and accountably sharing—transformative couplings of receptivity-communication-action—are significant ethical-archival ecologies of relationship.

1.4 Participatory Knowledge and Consciousness as Methodology and the Correlative Forging of Transformative Curatorial Practice

My re/search, both in terms of methodological outlook as well as curatorial explorations, is grounded in conscious and integrative gathering of experiential knowledge. I connect with knowledge as a participatory commons; I do not invoke commons as a universalizing ontology but as a way of foregrounding the interrelational fabric of consciousness from which knowledge arises. Within this interrelational framework, I engage cognitive and social diversity as well as differences in processes of meaningful co-engagement rather than separation. It is from an expansive, democratic, non-humancentric, and relational understanding and activation of knowledge and consciousness that I have come to desire and work to contribute to the transformation of the imagination-practice of curation. Such an understanding and activation also methodologically orients the transdisciplinary bases of my curatorial re/membering.

My experience has enriched my understanding of knowledge as participatory, an active process and endeavour grounded in relational interactions and creative responsiveness in relationship. The awareness and activation of the ability to connect, respond, and reciprocate—an integral aspect of creative capacity—is an acknowledgement of the transformative nature of interrelational being. Transformative participation and emergent knowledge thus become activations of personal responsibility and accountability amidst fluid constellations of

experience. Responsibility and accountability here may be understood as forms of actively engaged ethical reciprocity from an individual's humanity and co-creative power and potential³² to interpersonal relations as well as broader social spheres.³³ My academic knowledge making through this dissertation as well as the opening up of the imagination-practice of curation are consciously part and parcel of such a creative-transformative internal, interpersonal, and social effort and process, not separate or hierarchized in relation to it. My re/search—the ethical re/orienting and re/membering of curatorial practice—may thus be contextualized as integrative, relational, and embodied rather than primarily an act of narrowly conceived rational comprehension of texts or the world. Expressed in another way, my research and curatorial explorations and contributions are configured by, not apart from, the connected, conscious, and creative pathways that I am forging. Significantly, within an emergent and processual—participatory—ecology of knowledge, my epistemic conceptions become reflective of and

³² Another way of articulating my position here is that personal responsibility and accountability—understood as key elements of integrity—are constitutive of deep forms of agency. Although thought through and expressed quite differently, my understanding here is similar to that of moral philosopher Christine M. Korsgaard. She argues, “the agency of the soul, of the human individual, is constituted by the adoption of deliberate procedures whose perfect realization depends upon personal justice or morality. The unity that is essential to agency and moral integrity are one and the same thing” (14). See *The Constitution of Agency: Essays on Practical Reason and Moral Psychology* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2008).

³³ My re/orienting of curation, of articulating it as a transformative practice, also relates to making visible vital and powerful ways of being and doing, rooted in connective intelligence and responsibilities and accountabilities in and to our relations. A positive architecture of power is invisibilized through understanding power primarily as the power-over of dominance or as the measure of social, economic, and cultural capital, or the way subjectivity may be shaped by disciplining social forces, relations, and desires. In implicitly and explicitly building and activating an alternate understanding of power in my thesis, I do not ignore issues of dominance and unequal social relations. I rather locate injustice and inequality as constraints on people's creative power and freedom to “live the kind of lives they have reason to value,” in Amartya Sen's rich turn of phrase (244).

contingent on the care and consideration I bring to living and being rather than claims of novelty or cleverness. Writer, thinker and activist Audre Lorde incisively articulates the connection of such an embodied notion of knowledge to the courage to dream and forge, to the empowerment of creativity within³⁴:

Sometimes we drug ourselves with dreams of new ideas. The head will save us. The brain alone will set us free. But there are no new ideas still waiting in the wings to save us as women, as human. There are only old and forgotten ones, new combinations, extrapolations and recognitions from within ourselves—along with the renewed courage to try them out. And we must constantly encourage ourselves and each other to attempt the heretical actions that our dreams imply.... In the forefront of our move toward change, there is only poetry to hint at possibility made real.³⁵

³⁴ Lorde articulates “creative power and harmony” as the “erotic” (55)—“the sensual—those physical, emotional, and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us...the passions of love, in its deepest meanings” (56). Lorde thus shares not only my deeply internal and transformative sense of creativity but also its democratic bases. As she writes, “there is difference between painting a back fence and writing a poem, but only one of quantity. And there is, for me, no difference between writing a poem and moving into sunlight against the body of a woman I love” (58). See “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,” *Sister Outsider*, 53-59.

³⁵ Audre Lorde, “Poetry is Not a Luxury,” *Sister Outsider*, 38-39. My view of art is that it is a form of transformative participation in the world, not representational in bases. Lorde carried a personal process and vision that strongly concurred with a participatory conception of artistic practice, which in her specific case she inhabited strongly through poetry:

Poetry is the strongest expression I have of certain ways of making, identifying, and using my own power. Because poetry is not a presentation, is not a product. Poetry—for me—is a way of living. It’s the way I look at myself, it’s the way I move through myself, my world, and it’s the way I metabolize what happens and present it out again (146).

See “The Creative Use of Difference,” Interview with Marion Kraft in *Conversations with Audre Lorde*, ed. Joan Wylie Hall (Jackson: University Press of Mississippi, 2004): 146.

Not only do I view knowledge and culture in specific forms such as poetry as participatory forging of the world and hence transformative, I also highlight creativity as encompassing a far more extensive and conceptually and practically diverse domain than artistic practice. I root creativity in the transformative together-doing thinking-process-action that is culture to provide an expansive canvas for envisioning and practicing curation as a societal endeavour.

An experientially integrative or participatory notion of knowledge supports an important methodological as well as thematic thread in my dissertation—thought and emotion, perception and imagination are material and materializing forms of creative relationship to the world; they are dynamic world-involving processes of interaction. I thus locate my own re/search and research process in relation to curatorial practice in the intricate observation and movements of my thoughts, feelings and perceptions, and relational acts of re/membering, witnessing, envisioning, connecting and so on.

Emotive-intellectual journeying, when activated from a place of open inquiry and learning, creates expansive practical possibilities for nurturing and sustaining creativity and connection—sensitivity, attentiveness, and spaciousness in relationship. The ethical-relational thoughts-reasons-actions³⁶ that constitute such journeying co-creatively develop not only transformative knowledge but also enact a different consciousness into being. When I carefully ponder on the imperative that shapes my knowledge-making and correlatively informs my transformative explorations of curation, the desire to shift consciousness to a place of radical honesty, humility, openness, and connectedness comes to the fore. My desire is to inspire and contribute to instigations of these conscious/ness movements and re/memberings within artworld-academic terrains and across social spheres.

I intimately experience interrelationship as the heart of consciousness, and my production of knowledge and research as an experiential-relational dynamic of responding and participating, learning and teaching that I share with others, the earth, and the cosmos (all that

³⁶ I conjoin thought-reason-action as I understand thought and reason to be integral aspects of action as well as world-involved forms of activity themselves. Thought and action are not isolated—they carry simultaneity/congruence in that how one acts embodies the thinking and reason one is acting out of.

is). I view the experience of consciousness as being co-created through the intricacies of our relationships to the human and more-than-human world around us. For example, the diverse awareness we may carry regarding the creativity and knowledge of rivers, rocks, crows, or trees is interrelated to the sensitivity of our connection and responsiveness to their existence and lives. Connection and responsiveness to the more-than-human world and the conscious nourishment and expansion of these relational dynamics are methodologies and forms of deep practical knowledge as well as vital sources of ethical-practical reason and reasoning. Acknowledgement, engagement, and connection to the lives of others and, for me, also the sacredness and equality of all life³⁷ is thus not first and foremost a theoretical endeavour but a practical commitment to our interrelational existence and consciousness. Interestingly, such considerations on participatory cognition, consciousness and reality—how these emerge from navigating relational environments—are garnering support in multiple fields, such as the philosophy of science and the biology of consciousness.³⁸

³⁷ In relation to the idea of the equality of all life, I agree with psychologist Gay Hendricks that “we are equal parts of the whole, and to pretend that we are special cases is not only a fantasy but a potentially disastrous one” (68). See *Conscious Living: Finding Joy in the Real World* (New York: HarperOne, 2000).

³⁸ See Hans Radder, *The World Observed/The World Conceived* (Pittsburgh: University of Pittsburgh Press, 2006) for philosophy of science related reflections on how cognition and experiential participation are intertwined.

For very clear and grounded exploration of how consciousness comes from our environmental embeddedness, see Alva Noë, *Out of Our Heads: Why You are Not Your Brain, and Other Lessons from the Biology of Consciousness* (New York: Hill and Wang, 2009). Noë makes a persuasive scientific and philosophical case for understanding consciousness as something jointly enacted through and with the brain, body, and world rather than being an atomized cerebral process. He explains that if we think of the brain and body as musical instruments then consciousness is the music that is made through the brain and body’s relational interactions with the world (64).

David Bohm likewise upholds the co-constitution of individual and social consciousness-reality, while connecting consciousness and hence knowledge and creativity to a cosmic dimension: “intelligence does not...arise primarily out of thought...the deep source of intelligence is the unknown and indefinable totality from which all perception originates.”³⁹ Bohm further argues that to understand the world in a deeply creative and cohesive manner, individually, socio-culturally, and cosmically, can lead one to perceptually experience the world differently.⁴⁰ My re-visioning of curation, creativity, and archiving stem from sensorily and perceptually increasingly feeling and connecting to the sacredness, co-creativity, co-intelligence, and co-knowledge-making of all life. There is a cognitively assonant movement here in that the philosophical reflections in my dissertation are emergent from my experiential relationship to curation and far beyond. And my deep hope with this dissertation is to make visible, encourage, and cultivate expansive ways of imagining and inhabiting creative-ethical perception and relationship thereby contributing to the opening up of more practical possibilities for transformative thought-reason-action, individually and collectively, within and across contexts, social spheres, and communities.

Apart from a participatory conception of consciousness, an important viewpoint I strongly concur and connect with in this book pertains to the notion that consciousness involves a practical commitment that doubles as a moral commitment. Noë states: “...our commitment to other minds...[is] not a theoretical commitment at all. We don’t come to learn that others think and feel as we do, in the way we come to learn, say, that you can’t trust advertisement. Our commitment to the consciousness of others is, rather, a presupposition of the kind of life we lead together” (32-33).

³⁹ Bohm, *On Creativity*, 75.

⁴⁰ Ibid. , 47 and David Bohm and F. David Peat, “Creativity in the Whole of Life,” *Science, Order, and Creativity*, 2nd ed. (London: Routledge, 2000): 229-271.

1.5 Methodologies of Crossing⁴¹: Transdisciplinarity, Connective Practice, and Relational Community

It is from within the framework of an expansive, democratic, non-humancentric, and relational understanding and activation of knowledge that I have come to be interested in as well as pursue transdisciplinary scholarship.⁴² I utilize transdisciplinarity to enable and enrich my exploration of the interrelationships of creativity, ethics, curation and connection as a complex, societal vision-practice. Transdisciplinarity resonates with my methodological approach within this dissertation to bring my scholarship closer to the multidimensionality of everyday life and

⁴¹ “Methodologies of Crossing” as a title is inspired by M. Jacqui Alexander’s turn of phrase “Pedagogies of Crossing” in *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durnham: Duke University Press, 2005). Alexander and I share meaningful ground in how we locate, access, and activate knowledge as an ongoing, mutual process of “making the world in which we live intelligible to ourselves and to each other” across “inherited boundaries of geography, nation, episteme, and identity” (6). Another key element our work shares is an exploration of the intersections of spirituality, interdependence and justice.

⁴² Practical, human processes are essential to methodology and need to be acknowledged and valued as such otherwise it can become too easy to mystify knowledge-making. The task of standing still internally, deeply listening, having opportunity for deep exchange, observing the movement of our feelings and thoughts—can all be surprisingly powerful forms of methodology where in the depth and process of our creativity and knowledge-making is not only made visible but forged.

In terms of my PhD research, my teaching and speaking engagements were (and are) practical and grounded ways in which I learned and grew through both the process and interaction these activities instigated. For example, speaking opportunities specifically worked to intensify gathering—a methodology of pulling together of threads, sharpening of insights, and expansion and extension of ideas

In terms of teaching, the interpersonal site of the classroom contributed to my deeper appreciation of the power of locating knowledge-making and transcommunal dialogue as an integrative, relational, and embodied personal and social process rather than primarily an act of narrowly conceived rational comprehension. My research for each course also fed my dissertation. The graduate and undergraduate students I have taught came from the fields of art, media, design, law, cognitive neuroscience, agricultural science, philosophy, education, curatorial studies, policy studies, anthropology, archaeology, archival studies, political science, etc., providing exemplary opportunity for transdisciplinary dialogue.

the flow of experience. As interdisciplinarian Desmond Manderson states: “Transdisciplinarity is a work of *imagination*, a putting of color and life and diversity back into scholarly research.... In doing Transdisciplinary research, we are bringing the world of scholarship a little bit closer to the world of the everyday, which is to say, a world in which every day proves more surprising and complex and suddenner than we supposed.”⁴³ Transdisciplinarity also supports my efforts to inhabit knowledge as a co-learning process across social borders⁴⁴ while cohesively integrating and restructuring understanding of many key concept-practices, from creativity, archiving and curation to media, science, and technology.⁴⁵ My inhabitation of transdisciplinarity, strongly motivated by epistemic, practical, and socio-ethical concerns that extend beyond academia, is de-

⁴³ See Desmond Manderson, “The Future: From Where to From Here?” *Transdisciplinarity: reCreating Integrated Knowledge: Advances in Sustainable Development*, eds. Margaret A. Somerville and David J. Rapport (Oxford, EOLSS Publishers Ltd., 2000): 255.

⁴⁴ My transdisciplinarity involves crossing of epistemological and ontological terrains, boundaries of nation and social positionality, flows of histories and identities. The disciplinary borders I move across in my dissertation also contain an intricate web of interrelated epistemic-social boundaries that I engage, question, cross, overturn, bridge, and transform. Julie Thompson Klein intricately maps such networks of boundaries at the inter- and intra-faces of academia and society: “The boundaries include demarcations of academic and popular knowledge (in esoteric knowledge versus everyday life), science versus nonscience (pseudoscience and applications of science), disciplines (physics versus chemistry or biology), subdisciplinary specialities (economic, social, and political history), hybrid fields (social psychology, environmental studies, and materials science), disciplinary clusters (science, technology, social science, and humanities), taxonomic categories (hard versus soft knowledge, basic versus applied research), learning skills (integrative thinking, literacy, comparative methodology, and ability to deal with diversity), knowledge activities (transmission versus discovery, explanation versus interpretation), knowledge forms (quantitative versus qualitative, objective versus subjective and normative), and sectors of society (industry, academe, government, and the public)” (4-5). See Julie Thompson Klein, *Crossing Boundaries: Knowledge, Disciplinarity, and Interdisciplinarity* (Charlottesville: University of Virginia Press, 1996).

⁴⁵ The methodologies that I employ for rethinking the understanding-practices of archiving and curation, science and technology include theoretical extension, expansion, and restructuring. These are well-recognized methodologies of interdisciplinary integration and articulated in detail in Allen F. Repko *Interdisciplinary Research: Process and Theory* (Los Angeles: Sage, 2008).

disciplinary in bases i.e. exploring disciplinary frameworks or filling disciplinary gaps are not the primary determinants of my direction, vision, or knowledge production.⁴⁶ I view de-disciplining as an ongoing endeavour of being reflective with regard to disciplinary norms, values, and insights. This process can assist in thwarting insularity and encouraging genuine openness to knowledge within and beyond the academy as well as one's own epistemic parameters. At its heart, de-disciplining is a call to observe and learn in an unfettered manner, to carry a deeply creative perception both individually and in relation to the intertwined social process of life and knowledge.

Such a personal yet socially aware activation of knowledge shares meaningful ground with what literary critic and public intellectual Edward Said articulates as the core of humanism—an open, fallible, democratic learning process and journey ultimately rooted in self-knowledge, with openness to critique, exchange, and interaction with diverse others.⁴⁷ Where I differ from Said is that he grounds humanism as a scholarly endeavour in aesthetic (artistic) experience and attention, constructing the aesthetic as irreconcilable with “quotidian experiences

⁴⁶ De-disciplining does not imply a devaluation of the usefulness or necessity of disciplinary forms of knowledge.

⁴⁷ Edward Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2004), specifically note p. 21-22, 80, and 116-17. During the tenure of my PhD, I was a Pierre Elliott Trudeau Foundation Scholar. The Trudeau community is intergenerational and interdisciplinary, active in areas of public policy, social change, environment, and human rights. Within this community, policy and interdisciplinary engagement and inspiration were richly evident. At the same time, I noticed that an intellectual and humanist stance in which people inhabited and encouraged the right and responsibility to both question and address social issues as human beings first and foremost, not due to their training in economics or comparative literature or law and so on, was quite rare. This witnessing reconfirmed the necessity of activating such a stance and has helped shape my resolve to bring an open humanist spirit to my doctoral research and writing.

of existence.”⁴⁸ In my view, art can indeed be an incredibly powerful, cognitively and socially rich way of making sense of, moving in, and shaping inner and outer worlds. Nevertheless, I do not hierarchize or separate the aesthetic or artistic from the creative power and potential of daily life, or how creativity and creative process are present in the natural world. My methodological orientation and activation of humanism is thus more grounded in and committed to the human and more-than-human experiential-creative continuum rather than artcentric notions of aesthetics or creativity.

The creative relationality that is at the heart of how I have come to connect with knowledge, humanism, and curatorial re/visioning carries strong affinity with Fabiola Nabil Naguib’s concept of “connective practice.”⁴⁹ Naguib describes connective practice as a mode of feeling, thinking, and living that may include inter- or transdisciplinarity as a material aspect of practice but arises from a wider landscape of “personal, communal, and ancestral imaginings and legacies.”⁵⁰ She defines and explores connective practice as a way of inhabiting personal responsibility and accountability amidst “constant impact, flow, and crossing”⁵¹ in an alive, interconnected universe. Through intertwining interconnectivity with accountability in relation to “all that is of the earth and cosmos,”⁵² Naguib provides an ethic for “imagining and engaging human and non-human agency, creativity, and knowledge production across reified borders and

⁴⁸ Said, *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, 63.

⁴⁹ See Fabiola Nabil Naguib, “Decolonizing Inhabitations of Interdisciplinarity: Re/orienting ‘Interdisciplinarity’ within Connective Practice,” in *Collision: Interarts Practice and Research*, ed. David Cecchetto et al. (New Castle Upon Tyne: Cambridge Scholars Press, 2008): 35-49.

⁵⁰ Ibid. , 36.

⁵¹ Ibid. , 47.

⁵² Ibid. , 41.

socialized divides on the planet.”⁵³ In terms of my scholarship, connective practice speaks to my efforts to connect to and build ways of being and knowing that restore and nourish more caring and reciprocal co-existence in a landscape of relational responsibilities. Connective practice also resonates with my ethic of democratizing knowledge, where there is acknowledgment of and reciprocity with diverse knowledges, research, and creativity, within and beyond the academy and normatively defined public spheres. My personal experience of connective practice is that it is an intricate, intimate and practical way of learning and bridging from a sense of care and wonder rather than presumption, fear, or control.

Processes of (ethical) connection are also profound methodologies of community making. As writer, activist, and thinker Gloria Anzaldúa perceptively notes, “to bridge is to attempt community, and for that we must risk being open to personal, political, and spiritual intimacy, to risk being wounded.”⁵⁴ Truly reaching across involves making ourselves vulnerable, embracing risk, exposure, and uncertainty, as well as possibilities of trust, intimacy, and connection. I believe the consequences of this kind of reaching across could be revelatory for academic knowledge-making. My envisioning of transformative curatorial practice through transdisciplinary and plural worldview engagement involves acknowledging and engaging diversity of thought, experience, history, and practice; mapping and developing connections and common ground across intellectual and social borders; positing a creative, open, and evolving vision-practice of relational knowledge; and keeping personal and collective responsibility and

⁵³ Naguib, “Decolonizing Inhabitations of Interdisciplinarity,” 47-8.

⁵⁴ Quoted in AnaLouise Keating, “From Intersections to Interconnections, Lessons for Transformation from This Bridge Called My Back: Radical Writings by Women of Color,” in *The Intersectional Approach: Transforming the Academy Through Race, Gender, and Class*, eds. Michele Tracy Berger and Kathleen Guidroz (Chapel Hill: The University of North Carolina Press, 2009): 85.

accountability at the heart of a shared, interactive process of knowledge-making. These efforts are in part motivated by and an activation of bridging, an intentional, constructive process of community.⁵⁵ I also inhabit my scholarship as an integral aspect of ethical community making through illuminating and expanding on ways in which curation as an ethic of care can play a vital role in nourishing human and non-human creativity in daily relations as well as through different structural orientations. In the same way that Naguib poetically illuminates that “justice can be activated with every breath and every step we take,”⁵⁶ I have to come to connect with community as also involving a moment-to-moment relational process. Community is emergent from relationship, and relationships are nurtured and sustained through conscious activation and renewal amidst creative flux.⁵⁷ The methodological motivation and effort to non-coercively build and expand community aligns well with Edward Said’s call for the humanities to be committed to a “more open sense of community as something to be won and of audiences as human beings to be addressed.”⁵⁸ In my dissertation, the methodological correlating of participatory knowledge

⁵⁵ Such a methodological effort may even be termed epistemological and ontological transcommunalism, transcommunalism being a concept that John Brown Childs has developed, for naming “both a historic reality and a living mode,” marking terrains of cooperative and respectful interactivity in the midst of heterogeneity (12). See John Brown Childs, *Transcommunalism: From the Politics of Conversion to the Ethics of Respect* (Philadelphia: Temple University Press, 2003).

⁵⁶ Naguib, “Justice is Not a Marketplace,” *Uninhabiting the Violence of Silencing*, 22.

⁵⁷ I am grounding individual agency in the making of community and this agency is of course exercised with each other in a broader landscape of legacy, place, history etc., or values, vision, norms, and so on, as well as socio-political and power relations.

⁵⁸ See “Opponents, Audiences, Constituencies, and Community,” in *Reflections on Exile and Other Essays* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2002): 140.

and relational community making serves to illuminate as well as further understandings of the interconnected nature of enlightenment (knowledge) and emancipation (freedom).⁵⁹

1.6 Democratic Curatorial Reason and Reasoning and the Furthering of Justice

Thus far I have laid out a deeply democratic understanding of creativity, in that it pervades all aspects of life, human and non-human, and carries individual, social as well as cosmic dimensions. This open, democratic sense of creativity is at the heart of my argument for envisioning and inhabiting curation as a societal endeavour. Re/locating archiving within creative relationalities of perception-communication-action—again within a dynamic human and non-human whole context—further grounds my opening up of the imagination-practice of curation.⁶⁰ Through such radical rethinking of curatorial imperatives, engagement with artistic practice is not evacuated but made ethically expansive and socially integrative—an open and caring process of personal and social inquiry, dialogue, and response with attentiveness to artistic motivations, values, purposes, and practices within the connective, creative flow of life.

I have further delineated creativity through a wide range of connected interrelational dynamics, such as sensitivity in perception, responsiveness in relationship, and deep personal

⁵⁹ As an example, enlightenment, whether in terms of reflection and reasoning or meaningful information and knowledge, is a crucial aspect of furthering democracy and enhancing justice. This insight is richly explored within a dialogical and relational framework in Sen, “Voice and Social Choice,” in *The Idea of Justice*, 87-113. Education and public discussion are crucial, Sen highlights, because they “help advance the use of more information in the procedures of public choice and in the exploration of social justice” (94).

⁶⁰ My bracketing together of perception-communication-action is to highlight their entanglement. Bohm and Peat also discuss “perception-communication” as indivisible in their thoughts on creativity and science, see esp. *Science, Order, and Creativity*, 70.

agency or self-determination through responsibility and accountability. Creativity as a power-full force of relationality, of consciousness, provides opportunities for illuminating, forging, and expanding connections across “reified borders and socialized divides.”⁶¹ It provides a rich way of perceiving and engaging the world more in its connectivity rather than atomization, of participating in wholeness, rather than cognitive-social dissonance with the equality of all life and the creativity of nature.⁶² The trans-formative nature of creativity and its conscious sustenance is what I illuminate and locate as a democratic or participatory curatorial logic and reason.⁶³

Enfolded within my conception of this democratic curatorial stance is a rich constellation of ethical-relational motivations, processes, and actions—connectedness. Connectedness as practical reason is the heart of my ethical re/membering and re/orienting of curation. The concept of practical reason helps to clarify how my expansive and ethical curatorial concept-vision has practicality built into its very constitutional logic. If one carries a commitment to connectedness, therefore putting it into motion, connectedness would impact what one values, what one builds,

⁶¹ See Fabiola Nabil Naguib, “Decolonizing Inhabitations of Interdisciplinarity,” 48.

⁶² My integrative thinking on creativity here shares substantive ground with David Bohm, who connects creativity with the ability to perceive, feel, and respond to the knowing that “*all* is an unbroken and undivided movement in which apparently separate things are abstracted as relatively stable aspects” (110). See “The Art of Perceiving Movement,” *On Creativity*, 76-124.

⁶³ In other words, such a worldview-practice of creativity acts as a ground for expansive curatorial efforts and is also the logic behind expanding these efforts. What constitutes “a reason” for thinking and acting a certain way is beautifully articulated by Christine Korsgaard: “Once the space of awareness—of reflective distance, as I like to call it—opens up between the potential ground of a belief and the belief itself, or between the potential ground of an action and the action itself, we must step across that distance with some awareness that we are doing so, and so must be able to endorse the operation of that ground as the basis for what we believe or do. And a ground of belief and action whose operation on us as a ground is one that we can endorse is a reason” (4). See *The Constitution of Agency*.

what kind of person one wishes to be in the world, what conception of goodness and justness one carries. In moral philosopher Christine Korsgaard's lucid definition "the principles of practical reason" are "the principles by which we take control of our representations or conceptions of the world, and of our own movements—using 'movement' as a general term for the various ways, physical and mental, that we bring about states of affair in the world."⁶⁴ In arguing that being connected, conscious, and creative is correlated and co-emergent, I am highlighting that connectedness and consciousness as grounds of practical reason are constitutive to creative thought and action.

In evoking creativity as a constitutively ethical process, I am contributing to the imaginations and landscapes of justice—how fundamentally—humanly—justice is not firstly an abstract feature of policies, institutions, and social contracts, though these can and do play a very vital role in furthering justice.⁶⁵ Justice is foremost an ordinary personal and social way of discerning and relating, an exercising of care and cooperation, mutuality and reciprocity that is widely found across species.⁶⁶ As philosopher Robert Solomon elucidates, justice is the way "one lives, the way that one feels, the way one acts and responds and seeks out situations in everyday life."⁶⁷ Solomon's description as well as conception of justice as "an open and

⁶⁴ Korsgaard, 9.

⁶⁵ Many of the thinkers I engage, from Naguib to Lorde, Sen to Solomon richly illuminate aspects of this understanding.

⁶⁶ Leading cognitive ethologist Marc Bekoff and philosopher Jessica Pierce share this outlook and persuasively argue for the strong presence of justice and morality in the animal world, based on integrating decades of scientific research on animal behaviour in their collaborative work, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008).

⁶⁷ Robert Solomon, *A Passion for Justice: Emotions and the Origins of the Social Contract* (New York: Addison-Wesley Publishing Company, 1990): 15.

receptive and (com) passionate mind toward the world”⁶⁸ is resonant with my conceptions of creativity. Creativity as rich responsiveness, as the ability to feel, think, and act with regard for the autonomy, well-being, and dignity of others, foregrounds its integral connection to justice. Creativity is thus a way of making relational agency—response-ability and accountability—central to justice, rooting the work of transformation not in a distant ideal or something external but in our very selfhood as well as the choices and actions undertaken that shape the kind of lives we lead together. Significantly, creativity, as the conception of various aspects of life, whether constructed as personal, political, economic, or ecological, as interrelational and interconnected together-doings supports an existentially relatable, immensely practical, and integrated conception of justice.

The reverence, care, and connectedness that I yoke creativity with may also be simply and directly articulated as love. Love is at the heart of my personal ethics, curatorial vision, and methodology, understood as attentiveness, integrity and care in living and relating, communicating and reasoning. Love is an intensely personal and emotive methodological basis that simultaneously deepens meaningful efforts in public reasoning. If public reasoning is a participatory, multidirectional process of critical and creative dialogue and reflection and socio-ethical evaluation, love provides a most profound motivation for observing and perceiving with an open heart and mind, for responding and reciprocating with deep feeling and understanding, for undertaking and sustaining ethical and just action.

⁶⁸ Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, 28.

Unfettered public reasoning, Amartya Sen argues, both demands and furthers objectivity.⁶⁹ The ethical, social, and political convictions that motivate as well as shape my rethinking of curation as a societal endeavour inhabit experiential-relational objectivity. This conception of objectivity is not to be confused with transcendent notions of objectivity that ignore or do not make central awareness and accountability of how one's perceptions, positionalities, and other factors influence social evaluations. My methodological position of experiential-relational objectivity centres on the importance of radical honesty, attentiveness of heart, mind, and spirit, and commitment to listen and exchange with diverse others to come to more considered and depthful social understandings and evaluations.⁷⁰ My view of objectivity includes emotions, feelings, and other forms of relational rationality as aspects of deep knowledge and discernment and I activate them as such in my research explorations.⁷¹ This

⁶⁹ See Sen, "Impartiality and Objectivity" and "Closed and Open Impartiality," *The Idea of Justice*, 114-123 and 124-152.

⁷⁰ I have come to value relational objectivity through reflecting on the pursuit of ethics and justice. When individuals or communities call for ethical relationality, connection to humanity or advancement of justice, these calls do not largely arise, I believe, from social assessments based on subjective or personal whim. People often carry strong views of what is important, what is fair, what is reasonable, what is unjust, what needs to change, and communicate, dialogue, argue, and act from considered reasons and reasoning. And minds can be and do change based on the sharing of others, which may include feelings, narratives, reasons, and knowledge that we may previously have been oblivious to or not fully understood or been convinced by. I thus think that though personal and social positions shape us, we certainly have the capacity to stretch and reflect, to pay attention to the hearts and situations of others, and learn and grow from these encounters to transform or deepen our social evaluations.

⁷¹ In relation to my position that emotions are integral aspects of ethical knowledge and discernment, I am not ignoring the unsettling or at times unpredictable nature of emotions. The unsettling aspect of emotions is an integral part of the recognition that we are deeply vulnerable creatures, interdependent and interrelated, possessing more collaborative versus sole control of our lives. As well, it is important to not to collapse lack of emotional development or maturity with the supposed irrationality of emotions. As well, emotions as forms of cognitive and social evaluation are open to further reasoning and reflection. They are powerful archives of personal and social relations, histories, and understanding, and to learn

understanding of relational objectivity makes ample room for concept-practices such as love and creativity, which are not only important thematics in my work, but also dynamic methodological forces of valuable epistemic shifts and movements.⁷² As David Bohm and F. David Peat encapsulate:

...the essential need is for a “loosening” of rigidly held intellectual content in the tacit infrastructure of consciousness, along with a “melting” of the “hardness of the heart” on the side of feeling. The “melting” on the emotional side could perhaps be called the beginning of genuine love, while the “loosening” of thought is the beginning of awakening of creative intelligence. The two necessarily go together.⁷³

I inhabit love and creativity as crucial aspects of a democratic theoretical framework that seeks to enhance consciousness and justice. This methodological aspect illuminates the socio-ethical import of transforming curatorial practice—how expanding curation into a wider ethic of care and connection, involving the sustenance of human and non-human creativity at large, carries rich possibilities for deepening and furthering ethical relationality and the inhabitation of justice.

how to acknowledge and hold them, to learn to learn from them, is a crucial part of creative and conscious living. For a comprehensive and rich discussion of the intersections of emotions, ethics, cognition, and value, see Martha Nussbaum, *Upheavals of Thought: The Intelligence of Emotions* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001).

⁷² I value the dynamism of the words “shifts” and “movements,” which capture the idea of embodying change and motion that at the same time instigates others to respond. In *Conscious Living*, Gay Hendricks shares how for him “shift is an idea that is so useful and clearly expressed that you can feel it in your body. A move is a concept so applicable that it shows how to dance and grapple with the real problems that come at you every day” (54-55). I view love and creativity as being at the heart of transformative “shifts” and “moves.”

⁷³ Bohm and Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*, 271.

Chapter 2: Rethinking Curatorial Imperatives: Understanding and Moving Beyond Artworld-Academia Post/Industrial Logic and Terrain

In this chapter, I develop in some detail what I mean by the artworld-academia post/industrial complex and the curatorial dynamics that inform it. This chapter thus most directly engages with artworld politics and narratives, from exhibitions such as Documenta XI to the discourse of conceptualism. I delineate some of the pressures for change in the curatorial field while highlighting the continuity of lack of democracy and ethical clarity in the critical narratives and modes of reason/ing that shape artworld curatorial processes and efforts. I begin to make a case as to how and why transformative curatorial practice demands more—a creative reasoning and relationality that is deeply caring and connective, from interpersonal relations and interactions with the Earth to structural thinking and understanding. Overall, transformative curation is posited as way of supporting and nurturing radically open narratives and landscapes of human and more-than-human creativity.

2.1 Introductory Reflections on Curatorial Authority and Practice

Curatorial practice is often defined in terms of archival and/or creative engagement—from building, conserving, and managing collections of data and materials to exhibition production and broader conception as kaleidoscopic interpretative or participatory dialogue with artistic and archival practices. The exploration of archival and creative practices as embedded with/in and actively shaping socio-cultural narratives and spaces is also an important element of contemporary curation. Apart from being activated as multifaceted public spheres' and public access oriented practice or critical and interpretive rendezvous with human creative productions, curation is also claimed in the scientific management, display, and study of human and non-

human matter and life, from meteorites to spiders.⁷⁴ In many ways, information, records, objects, or activities deemed historically worthy or profitably extractable as legitimate contemporary scientific or creative documentation and knowledge find themselves preserved, cohered, and critically or uncritically facilitated and hypermaterialized under the authority of curation.

By “preserved” I mean that through acquisition for a collection, a prominent exhibition or ongoing exhibition record, or critical attention, art or archives come to be recognized for their “worth” and thereby historicized and preserved as an important part of local, regional, national, or global memory and culture. Whether the reality is denied or embraced, curators carry relative yet significant cultural power to deem what is and is not an important aspect of historical or contemporary record and relevance.⁷⁵ By “cohered” I mean that a curatorial premise and narrative under which archives or art are engaged can often give a degree of intellectual and social coherence to a body of work—curation is an integral aspect of the social process of cultural fact-making. By “critically” or “uncritically” I mean that curation may or may not be

⁷⁴ Below is a list of some literature on various crossings of curation. For curatorial practice in relation to oral documents and narratives see Nancy MacKay, *Curating Oral Histories: From Interview to Archive* (Walnut Creek: Left Coast Press, 2007). For artworld related overview see Melanie Townsend, ed., *Beyond the Box: Divergent Curatorial Practices* (Banff: Banff Centre for the Arts, 2003) and Paul O’Niell, ed., *Curating Subjects* (London: Open Editions, 2007). For an example of a science based curatorial endeavor, see *Medical Museion: The Culture of Medicine: Yesterday, Today, Tomorrow*. The University of Copenhagen, n.d. Web. 10 Aug. 2011. For how internet and virtual networks are reconstituting curatorial practice see Joasia Krysa, ed., *Curating Immateriality: The Work of the Curator in the Age of Network Systems* (New York: Autonomedia, 2006). For a critical encounter between anthropology and museological practice see James L. Clifford, *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1997) and between archaeology and museological practice, see Tamara L. Bray, *The Future of the Past: Archaeologists, Native Americans, and Repatriation* (New York: Garland Publishing, 2001). For cross-disciplinary explorations see Sharon Macdonald, *Companion to Museum Studies* (Malden: Blackwell Publishing, 2006).

⁷⁵ This cultural power is relative to intersectional access and privilege of individual curators and the collectivities they are a part of (institutions, networks, etc.).

undertaken with an awareness of the myriad ways in which curatorial activities and discourses impact individuals and communities through brokering fact-making, creativity, knowledges, histories, and memories. There is enormous possibility for and often activation of gate-keeping and social streaming through artworld, academic, and wider social conventions and status-investment that in-forms curatorial practice.

I also mean to imply in an overall context that criticality is not necessarily an indicator of being less entrenched in the artworld-academic post/industrial complex.⁷⁶ As philosopher Michael Slote argues, “critical vigilance” may in fact be part of a process that “represents or constitutes a devaluing, an insufficient appreciation of the value, of love (and other emotional commitments and dispositions, including attitudes of caring or concern about others...).”⁷⁷ This evaluation of particular forms of criticality shares ground with the point I make in the introduction—consciousness first and foremost stems from practical-moral relational commitment rather than critical and theoretical thinking and positioning. Over the years I have argued as Slote does that “critical distance from feelings or emotions towards others constitutes an overvaluation of separateness from others and of autonomy understood in at least one traditional way [as critical vigilance].”⁷⁸ Criticality, when activated not as thoughtful

⁷⁶ A wide-ranging collection on curation that asks many pertinent questions and strongly and usefully critiques contemporary curatorial practice, with a specific focus on Germany, is *Men in Black: Handbook of Curatorial Practice*, eds. Christoph Tannert and Ute Tischler (Berlin: Künstlerhaus Bethanien, 2003). Critique can be useful but in becoming a primary endeavour with a self-sustaining momentum in the artworld it can often create more mystique and market value rather than clarity, honesty, and deep change.

⁷⁷ Michael Slote, *Ethics of Care and Empathy* (New York: Routledge, 2007): 80.

⁷⁸ Ibid. , 82. It is interesting to read through the edited transcripts of the curatorial conversations part of Zoe Gray, Miriam Kathrein, Nicolaus Schafhausen, Monika Szewczyk, and Ariadne Urlus, ed., *Rotterdam Dialogues: The Critics, The Curators, The Artists* (Rotterdam: Post Editions, 2010). The

responsiveness but almost a form of dissociative⁷⁹ thought and selfhood, something quite prevalent in artworld and academic terrains, can function in the service of ignoring, denying or devaluing relationality and connection as curatorial imperatives.⁸⁰ Further, non-dissociative criticality is better understood as one important aspect of responsibility within a broader task of curatorial relationship building that supports human and non-human creative flourishing.

By “hypermaterIALIZED” I am implying how meaning, coherency, and importance may be generated or aggrandized once art or archives enter dominantly revered curatorial sites. Institutionally, curatorial sites include libraries, museums, galleries, artist-run centres and university spaces, carrying the attendant social authoritativeness and cultural capital for shaping and sanctioning parameters of creativity, knowledge, innovation, merit, history, and memory. Due to increasing mobilization of community and critical pressure, curators in conventional institutional locales have been compelled to find ways of responding to inequity in representation and staffing, historical and social power-over relations, and stereotypical framing strategies.⁸¹

emphasis on critical vigilance is very present with curator Carolyn Christov-Barkargiev dissenting on several occasions.

⁷⁹ Being dissociative is not to be confused with impartiality in the specific sense of fairness or being detached in the sense of being firmly present in the moment.

⁸⁰ In contrast, criticality activated in the context of conscious relationality and connection demands immense spaciousness for ourselves, others, and collectivities.

⁸¹ For example, curator Lee-Ann Martin wrote a report for the Canada Council for the Arts on the inclusion and exclusion of contemporary Aboriginal art in public art galleries in Canada in 1990. She highlights that “at that time, few institutions demonstrated even a minimum level of commitment to the exhibition, collection, and documentation of Aboriginal art. However, within a few years following this study, the armed stand off at Oka, the Meech Lake Accord, and the five-hundredth anniversary of European arrival in the Americas heightened national consciousness around Aboriginal issues in Canada. At the same time, increasing pressure from First Nations artists contributed to the brief flurry of exhibitions and publications in many institutions throughout the 1990s” (50). See Lee Ann Martin, “An/Other One: Aboriginal Art Curators and Art Museums,” *The Edge of Everything: Reflections on*

The increasing visibility and brokering power of the curator, however, has to do with more than public pressure and critical evaluation of curatorial decision-making, discourses, and impact. It also has to do with the globalization of the economy and the need for cultural industries, and specifically curatorship, to survive, manage, mediate, and benefit from this shift. It is further connected to the rise of interdisciplinarity as well as celebrity culture both in academia and the artworld, and the need to be flexible enough to engage the great diversity and forms of artistic practice. These factors and more have impacted how curatorial endeavors have come to increasingly include and/or evoke cultural dialogue and work beyond the displaced space-time of an exhibition or the historical and social borders of institutional locales alone. Historian James Clifford describes the “decentred negotiation of cultural and political negotiations that are out of any imagined community’s control” as museum or curatorial “contact work,” “enacted in the

Curatorial Practice, ed. Catherine Thomas (Banff: Banff Centre Press, 2002): 49-56. Martin’s comments bring attention to how political struggle and discussion around continuing colonialism in Canada, strongly kept in the public eye by the initiatives of Indigenous peoples, impacted cultural institutions as well, adding pressure to think and act a little more openly with regard to curatorial commitments and programming. Her comments also highlight the relatively recent nature of the shift to more seriously recognize, include, and engage Aboriginal curators, scholars, and artists in mainstreamed art spaces.

Martin also mentions the first national meeting of Aboriginal curators convened in 1997 in Ottawa by the First Peoples’ Secretariat at the Canada Council for the Arts. Now numerous, very active Aboriginal arts organizations like TRIBE INC: A Center for Evolving Aboriginal Media, Visual and Performing Arts and Aboriginal Curatorial Collective exist today. And there are also Canada Council programs for assistance to Aboriginal as well as culturally diverse curators for residences in the Visual Arts. It was through this program that I worked as the Curator-in-Residence at the Vancouver Art Gallery from 2003-05.

I agree with Sharon Fernandez, who worked at the Canada Council as a Cultural Equity Co-ordinator for many years, that though it is important to recognize how continual “pressure and presence creates change” it is very crucial to also courageously question the values and practices of the cultural milieu we participate within and may find inclusion and recognition within (75). See Fernandez, “Into the Institution,” Interviewed by Monika Kin Gagnon, *13 Conversations about Art and Cultural Race Politics*, eds. Monika Kin Gagnon and Richard Fung (Montreal: Artextes Editions, 2002): 73-76.

historical contexts of colonization/decolonization, national formation/minority assertions, capitalist market expansion/consumer strategies.”⁸² Changes in curatorial and museological culture have clearly emerged from a wide range of converging as well as competing social pressures. I have come to a new understanding that re/membering curation as an ethic of care opens up connected ways of socio-ethically assessing and navigating this entangled complex of socio-political and commercial pressures.⁸³

Addressing issues of access and participation in the artworld, including efforts for equity and institutional reform, may be re/membered within the overall curatorial intention-practice of care—a connective willingness and commitment to creative-ethical relationality, personally as

⁸² Clifford, “Museum as Contact Zones,” in *Routes: Travel and Translation in the Late Twentieth Century*, 213 and 219. An example of museum “contact work” that comes to my mind is how the Museum of Anthropology at the University of British Columbia now often engages in some form of community collaboration in researching, building, and displaying its historical collections as well contemporary works from Indigenous communities. These efforts stem in part from acknowledging its colonial anthropological and museological bases. To explore a specific initiative, see the Reciprocal Research Network (RRN), “an online tool to facilitate reciprocal and collaborative research about cultural heritage from the Northwest Coast of British Columbia” with the aim of “facilitating communication and fostering lasting relationships between originating communities and institutions around the world.” The RRN is a joint undertaking by the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council, the U’mista Cultural Society and the Museum of Anthropology. See “About the RRN.” *Rrnpilot.org*. RRN, Jul. 30, 2013. Web. 21 Jun. 2011.

⁸³ References to the root meaning of curation in care are present in some curatorial literature but rarely engaged in some depth. For a thoughtful exception, see Jennifer Fisher, “Trick or Treat: Naming Curatorial Ethics,” in *Naming a Practice: Curatorial Strategies for the Future*, ed. Peter White (Banff: Banff Centre Press, 1996): 207-214. My original contribution rests in developing a sustained and detailed curatorial ethic of care and connection and demonstrating how it can be a vital source of practical reason and public responsibility in harmony with creative relationalities that exist within and far beyond artworld-academic terrains.

well as structurally.⁸⁴ In my view, an ethic of care thus greatly assists in not envisioning or inhabiting social change in so depersonalized a manner that the vital connection between personal *and* social responsibility and accountability is obscured. For example, even if all major institutional reforms were implemented today, either in the artworld-academia post/industrial complex or society at large, curators would still need to make social shifts real on the ground—making just practices a meaningful reality through their daily relational interactions. An ethic of care thus both includes and goes beyond thinking of how to make curation ethical and just in specific institutional ways—it equally and fully becomes regarding a way of relating and being in the world in every aspect of professional life. And if curation is redefined as the nurturing of creativity at large, and ethics is imagined in a whole context, then the locus of curatorial practice extends beyond a professionalized context to personal, socio-political, and ecological relations.⁸⁵

As I envision it, the central curatorial question is: Are we contributing to a loving and caring world, a world in which individual and collective human and non-human creativity can thrive? This is a (curatorial) call to view and value creativity and archiving as well as social contribution more in relational terms—caring, nurturing, sustaining—and less in status oriented, depersonalized and/or atomized cultural narratives.

⁸⁴ Motivations for access and equity can be wide-ranging—self-preservation, outside pressure, necessity of political and cultural realities, critical thinking, etc. Connectedness as a motivation for access and equity is thus not a given but a conscious choice of intention-reason-practice.

⁸⁵ The correlations of consciousness, connectedness, and creativity that I locate as democratic curatorial reason may be contrasted with thinking of the curatorial beyond art primarily in terms of translation, “postproduction approach” (12), friction, etc., in Maria Lind, ed., *Performing the Curatorial: Within and Beyond Art* (Berlin: Sternberg Press, 2012).

2.2 *Documenta XI* and a Critique of Contemporary Curatorial Logic

Making curatorial work negotiate and confront social struggles and power-over relations around community, authority, representation, and framing is valuable. At the same time, there are significant limitations to many of the critical curatorial responses to the intertwined complex of socio-political and commercial pressures. To develop and ground my critique I will briefly explore *Documenta XI* as an example. *Documenta*, first initiated in Kassel, Germany, in 1955 is a most prestigious “high” artworld exhibition and event. In 2002, it was organized under the artistic direction of Okwui Enwezor, a critically celebrated curator in the institutionalized global artworld arena.⁸⁶ Enwezor is from Nigeria and moved to the United States in 1983.⁸⁷ His rise in the curatorial field is seen as a pivotal so-called postcolonial moment in which a person of African heritage with commitment to global contemporaneity, rather than eurocentric or parochial art historical narratives, has achieved considerable recognition as a curator.

Documenta XI was claimed to be curatorially reconstituted by artistic director Okwui Enwezor in 2002 as a “constellation of public spheres,” rearticulating artistic practice in “the domain of the discursive rather than the museological” from “the sheer side of extraterritoriality.”⁸⁸ Discursive is being deployed as a concept-term, often attributed to Michel Foucault, whereby the materializing of a specific idea and practice, here being evoked in the

⁸⁶ The professionalized global artworld has many international biennales and major exhibition events. *Documenta* is probably the most prestigious of these artworld spectacles.

⁸⁷ See “Documenta/2002, Okwui Enwezor: Biography.” *Universes in Universe*. Gerhard Haupt and Pat Binder, n.d. Web. 5 Apr. 2013.

⁸⁸ Okwui Enwezor, “The Black Box,” *Documenta 11_Platform 5* (Ostildern-Ruit: Hatje Cantz, 2002): 54 and 42.

context of the artistic, is not approached from a particular disciplinary or institutional locale alone but seen as more incisively understood and constituted within constellations and overlaps across many societal spheres.⁸⁹ Extraterritoriality here is being invoked by Enwezor in terms of his attempt and desire to reach outside of the sedimented historical-social context of Kassel through discussion and workshop platforms in Vienna, Berlin, New Delhi, St. Lucia, and Lagos. He construes his curatorial vision as challenging the primacy of a physical exhibition space and its assertion of the autonomy of art through academic-theoretical re/framing, wider public engagement, and selection of works that entangle and locate art with/in the social, political, and ethical.⁹⁰ Enwezor also stresses his desire to expand the context and narratives in which curatorial and artistic practice is conventionally embedded, specifically opening up to the relations and subjectivities engendered under postcoloniality in which the “displaced...fashion new worlds by producing experimental cultures.”⁹¹

Despite engagement with the dynamics of critical responses to colonialism and imperialism within the context of globalization, and workshops across the globe to pluralize the locales of engagement, I am not convinced *Documenta XI* re/visions curatorial practice beyond the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. Specifically, some of the international platforms took place in settings that were not widely accessible and involved highly select participation. As Emese Süvecz pointedly argues: “...one asks oneself what kind of courage was needed to

⁸⁹ Michel Foucault, “Truth and Power,” Interview with Alessandro Fontana and Pasquale Pasquino in *Power/Knowledge: Selected Interviews and Other Writings: 1921-1977*, ed. Colin Gordon (New York: Pantheon Books): 109-133. This interview gives a sense of how discursivity is methodologically envisioned and activated by Foucault.

⁹⁰ See Enwezor, “The Black Box.”

⁹¹ Ibid. , 45.

withdraw with a select group of people in a luxurious hotel [the Hyatt] on a Caribbean island during a cold German winter week. Not only the exclusive location, but also the secluded character of the workshop contrasted strongly with the omnipresent rhetoric of ‘meeting’ and ‘confrontation’. An expansion of the concept of responsibility inevitably leads to these kinds of questions.”⁹² Such exclusivity of *Documenta XI*, including the circulation of much of the same litany of sanctioned critics, theorists and artists,⁹³ elicits many questions. For instance, is there substantive democratization in terms of who gets access to the exhibition and platforms as well as who participates in the construction and direction of their various discourses and practices? Are curatorial authority, decision-making, and other key aspects of the curatorial process, not only the exhibition or platforms themselves, open to broad public participation and scrutiny? In other words, the questions centre not only on radical expansion of access, but on making that expansion a collective, democratic process in terms of norms, values, and practices, interpersonal and structural.

Critic Anthony Downey also questions whether the discursive curatorial model of *Documenta XI* really provides an alternate model to the disciplined and domesticated positions it theoretically deconstructs. He underscores the fact that despite its critique of the avant-garde⁹⁴,

⁹² See Emese Süvecz, “Documenta XI – Platforms.” *Curating and the Educational Turn Seminar: Case Studies*. Free School for Art and Theory, 24 May 2011. Web. 23 Nov. 2011.

⁹³ Matthew Higgs raises the issue of how the same artists who usually get access to exhibitions like *Documenta* also dominated *Documenta XI*. See “Same Old Same Old,” *Artforum* 41.1 (2002): 166-167. The kind of concerns Higgs and Süvecz raise continue to be echoed with later versions of *Documenta*. For example see Julian Stallabrass, “Radical Camouflage at Documenta 13,” *New Left Review* 77 (2012): 122-133.

⁹⁴ The term “avant-garde” refers to the position of self-claiming or being claimed by others as artistically cutting-edge, experimental—ahead of society or one’s times, the “van-guard.” I associate the term with centric positioning and historicization.

“the formal properties of much of the work included in Documenta XI— formal properties that in a somewhat time-honoured fashion mediate the content (political or otherwise) of the work—draw their inspiration from the very techniques employed by the so-called modernist avant-garde.”⁹⁵ I observe a so-called double-bind, a deep tension created by a conscious choice—curatorial responses and visions may carry the desire to open up the artworld to a broader geographical, sociopolitical, and ethical terrain while not being willing to concede entrenchment in the very cultural capital that constrains, reifies, obscures, and directs contemporary art practice into a thoroughly commodified practice.

Unconceded entrenchment diminishes intellectually and emotionally honest *and* open engagement with artistic practices, serving more to maintain the ability “to be in the game” in “fields of cultural production.”⁹⁶ It also furthers cognitive dissonance through intellectual-social rationalizations rather than deepening transformation through supporting the development and realization of curatorial processes that are unflinchingly open and accessible, transparent and accountable. I believe true democratization of curatorial relations and processes along with humane thinking and practice around creative-ethical relationality are crucial to bringing powerful change to the field. A recent critique by art historian Sylvester Ogbechie emphasizes how Enzewor’s “regression into a closed-loop protocol of curatorial practice highlights the irony

⁹⁵ Anthony Downey, “The Spectacular Difference of Documenta XI,” *Third Text* 17.1 (2003): 90.

⁹⁶ Pierre Bordieu, “Principles for a Sociology of Cultural Works” in *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993): 176. Bordieu’s work thoughtfully focuses on how art and aesthetic taste, reception, and recognition are connected to social positioning and cultural capital. I am deploying Bordieu’s words to draw attention to our shared positioning in important regards while furthering my critique. What I am adding to this critique is how class or social dynamics can be recognized or intellectually voiced as a way of being in the know—without sufficient internal probing and honest social scrutiny critical discourses can continue along their own policing or dissociative spiral rather than instigating or nurturing expansive shifts.

of a global art world situation in which things ‘change’ while essentially remaining the same,” creating “the conditions for a new appropriation of the ‘Other’ by the West.”⁹⁷ Where I differ from Ogbechie is that I do not characterize personal ambition, capitalist co-optation as well as cultural entrenchment in aesthetics and narratives that are more palatable and consumable in the artworld today as solely or largely a “Western” phenomenon or site of control.⁹⁸ At this point, elites as well as those socialized into this dynamic from across all sectors of society from a broad range of countries participate in upholding such a curatorial-artworld regime.

The bases of the artworld-academic post/industrial complex may continue to be euro-colonially shaped—my discussions in the coming chapters acknowledge and contextually elaborate on this shaping. However, this colonial shaping does not negate the transformative potential and role of individual curatorial capacity or freedom in artworld or wider contexts.

⁹⁷ See Sylvester Ogbechie, “The Curator as Cultural Broker: A Critique of the Curatorial Regime of Okwui Enwezor in the Discourse of Contemporary African Art.” *H-net.org*. H-afrarts, 16 Jun. 2010. Web. 16 Jun. 2010.

⁹⁸ In my earlier work, I point out how in “diasporic enunciations within this specific context [the artworld], the position of the victim, equally appropriated by the art institution as well as the diasporic subject, is too precious to let go of along with strategies of commodification, co-optation, and upward mobility” (74). See Rajdeep Singh Gill, “Notes on Planetary and Curatorial Practice,” *Yishu: Journal of Contemporary Chinese Art* 3.2 (2004): 73-80. I also highlight how many artists from the South who circulate globally are not necessarily on the margins of their respective national communities but part of a national elite, class-based and/or settler-colonial. There needs to be acknowledgement of the responsibilities that stem from multiple positionalities in a range of communities and geographies—not homogenized, ahistorical, or selective use of the location of being diasporic, non-western etc. My position extends further from Ogbechie’s in other ways as well. For example, he contrasts the historical depth of careful art historical scholarship with the quick critical analysis of curatorial enterprises (“The Curator as Cultural Broker”). In context, Ogbechie’s point is well taken but my overall enterprise is to fundamentally question how we understand the nature and function of critique, challenging methodologies that inform both academia and the artworld. I wish to also go beyond artcentricity and to think of creativity as well as curatorial responsibility and accountability in an ethical planetary framework.

Access to socio-cultural and institutional privilege and capital as well as the particular legacies, practices, and worldviews that a particular curator may come from, connect with or engage certainly impacts their positionality within the artworld complex. In addition, each curator's specific individual journey and circumstances may also present social choices that may not be commensurate to those of others.⁹⁹ Regardless, these important factors do not evacuate the crucial importance of personal responsibility and accountability. Far too many academics, curators, and artists abstain from "uninhabiting the violence of silencing"¹⁰⁰—realities, truths, visions, and practices that deeply and honestly challenge self and others as well as instigate an integrative expansion of consciousness and connection within the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. Creativity is essential to transformative-connective processes and actions but this kind of understanding-inhabitation of creativity needs ethical re/membering and re/storying in the face of curatorial-academic-artworld obscuring.¹⁰¹

⁹⁹ Amartya Sen talks in a very grounded way about non-commensurability: "non-commensurability can hardly be a remarkable discovery in the world in which we live. And it need not, by itself, make it very hard to choose sensibly" (241). In the context of my point above, we often face choices that are not equivalent in value—they are alternatives, not equal. Each person, personally and socially may face very different kinds or a different range of choices, but this diversity or specificity does not remove the need for personal accountability. The implication is rather that the exact nature of our responsibilities and accountabilities may be specific and varied. At the same time, these responsibilities and accountabilities can be evaluated through scrutiny and interaction in the context of the relationships and places that they arise as well as broader dialogic understandings of caring or justness.

¹⁰⁰ The expression "uninhabiting the violence of silencing" and its multi-layered understanding is inspired by Fabiola Nabil Naguib's *Uninhabiting the Violence of Silencing*.

¹⁰¹ This distortion of creativity is connected to the distortion of our understanding of justice. As Robert Solomon in *A Passion for Justice* sharply puts it, "We have overintellectualized our feelings about justice, with the result that our feelings have become as confused as our theories, if indeed they have not been eclipsed by them" (3).

Be it conventionality or resistance to the status quo, desires for hegemonic power, recognition and entitlement often weave themselves into selfhood, enabling structures of downpression to continue functioning. Within the context of the art industry, art historian Suze Gablik identifies the powerful persistence of personal commitments to dominant “cultural myths [that] support economic advancement and individualist writ large rather than service, caring attitudes, and participation.”¹⁰² In response to the art industry’s value-practices of competitiveness, individualism, material success, and so on, Gablik persuasively calls for a remembering of the feminine, psychologically and in terms of goals, values, and practices: “our present models, which until recently have been focused on notions of autonomy and mastery, have been notably uncongenial to any aspect of the psyche that is receptive or connective, that emphasizes the importance of relationship and harmonious social interaction. This sense of deep affiliation, which breaks through the illusion of separateness and dualism, is the highest principle of the feminine.”¹⁰³ I would elaborate further—even the process of cultivating more receptive and caring relations is an endeavour without guarantees. It can be laden, like other journeys, with mixed intentions and motivations, including those that stem from ego and personal mobility—what is required is a willingness to be honest and humble, and to be responsible and accountable in each situation and endeavour. A particular kind of theoretical position, political leaning or a certain mode of artistic or spiritual practice does not preclude any one from the kind of deep personal work and/or the fierce gathering of social courage that may be needed in creative pathways centred around the challenge of growth and connectivity.

¹⁰² Suze Gablik, “Beyond the Rectangle, Out of the Frame: Art as Compassionate Action,” *The Reenchantment of Art* (New York: Thames and Hudson, 1991): 116.

¹⁰³ Ibid. 128.

It is due to the pervasiveness of personal investments in social mobility and outer measures of success that feminist sociologist Leela Fernandes argues that “a broader transformation of external structures of power can never fully occur if we do not simultaneously transform the internal investments of power that exist within ourselves,” necessitating “a brutally honest, inward process of self-examination to dispel the idealized self-images we carry around with us and provide the kind of radical humility required to really manifest social justice in this world.”¹⁰⁴ M. Jacqui Alexander calls this a willingness “to inhabit another, more receptive land,” to have the courage to not turn back “at the border of self-pity, cowardice and the knowledge of corruptibility.”¹⁰⁵ Honesty, humility, and personal accountability are powerful ethical-creative forces, especially when coupled with an incisive awareness of the intricate interconnection between self and social processes of inequality *and* just transformation.

Irrespective of the communities, institutions and socializations we may hail from and the criticality and analysis we may hold, the temptation to be power-brokers or to further our egos and ambitions can and does deeply affect all of us. This and other very *human* aspects of our motivations, interests, and actions—including those that are more communal or justice-oriented through reaching beyond self-interest or idealized self-image—are a significant though vastly underestimated arena for transformative reflection and action. The nature and field of curation needs to be confronted with deep internal reflection by all those who participate in it as well as emotional, intellectual, social and spiritual courage to imagine, relate, and build beyond contestory, imposing, and dissociative modes of reasoning and engagement. This may open up

¹⁰⁴ Leela Fernandes, *Transforming Feminist Practice: Non-violence, Social Justice, and the Possibilities of a Spiritualized Feminism* (San Francisco: Aunt Lute, 2003): 43-44.

¹⁰⁵ M. Jacqui Alexander, “Introduction,” in *Pedagogies of Crossing*, 17. Jacqui Alexander is invoking the reflections cited above in relation to her personal process and self-reflexivity.

more rich possibilities for curatorial practice to transformatively contribute to society. In addition, curators as well as other figures and participants in the artworld-academic complex need to clearly locate their voices and work in terms of multiple and specific positionalities, rather than homogenizing considerations of centre and periphery or strategically re/constructing them in the first place. Less multifaceted and honest positionalities contribute to unaccountable relations and thus a dulled responsiveness to justness.

2.3 Some Thoughts on the Intersections of Academia and Artworld

In my remapping of curatorial practice and vision, I invoke artworld and academia in the same breath as they are deeply crossing, feeding into each other in the contemporary moment. Most catalogue essays and curatorial statements, whether coming out of a small artist-run centre, a national gallery, or international biennale, articulate theoretical formulations and narratives through conversations with academic literature—an almost “sacred” aspect of the architecture and reference of much curatorial work. In turn, contemporary artists in (or aspiring to be in) the “high” artworld are expected to be well-versed and socialized in or at least deferential to academic historicizations and narratives around art and art history. I would argue that to not be entrenched in these academic narratives can often amount to being denied “contemporaneity,” to have one’s work not be engaged at all or violently and paternalistically rendered as “less complex,” “not cutting-edge,” etc. To impact this exclusion further, art historians and curators often write about and work with artists and creative practitioners whose work they see within the academic-gallery complex, making the system deeply self-replicating and self-referential.

Within this artworld-academia nexus, hierarchical, seemingly meritocratic & competitive mechanisms of accessing professional mobility deeply shape how theorists, scholars, and critics write, think, create, and curate.¹⁰⁶ Constant activity and innovation demanded by a capitalist model of knowledge and artistic production and circulation leads to great pressure to churn out publications and exhibitions in a production, investment, spectacle and speculation model (post/industrial terrain). I have carefully observed the impact of this model within educational and gallery contexts over the years. It creates professional and structural modes of thought and practice, from the nature of critique and training in art school, curatorial studies or other academic programs to how studio visits, curatorial framing and engagement is conducted, that do not sufficiently encourage or deepen generosity and openness of perception. I have observed a strong current encouraging the interpretation of the works and lives of others without solid grounding in what it means to consciously listen, hear, communicate and connect as a deeply human process or embodied ethic. Much energy is often expended instead on indirectly and directly inculcating specific assumptions or narratives of what is a more sophisticated and complex way to think, create, or be.¹⁰⁷ I believe it is more enriching to facilitate learning

¹⁰⁶ Those who get to curate, theorize about, or engage in art criticism in artworld contexts are generally people with formalized academic qualifications. They are often posited or presumed as having risen to positions of status because of their acuity and intelligence, meritocratically placing them in a loftier or unique position to be decision-makers, interpreters, and narrators. I believe both the curatorial process and the narratives around art equally and authentically belong to communities at large rather than solely a professionalized or sanctioned group with particular credentials, access, and critical vocabulary.

¹⁰⁷ I have noticed the powerful dynamic of imposition of meaning and policing narratives of artworld “complexity” and “acceptable” form and format of criticality in many places— from the numerous conferences and symposia I have attended or participated in to my extensive teaching experience at an art school, my curatorial residency at a major public gallery, and while working within other curatorial contexts.

opportunities for exploring internal, interpersonal, and structural ways of being fully responsive in relationship. Such responsiveness deepens the ability to share, understand, bear witness, and act with integrity across contexts, histories, and experiences—whether they are differential, multiple, or overlapping. It requires what the feminist philosopher and educator Nel Noddings calls “receptive attention”¹⁰⁸ and it is no coincidence that the Buddhist thinker and practitioner Thich Nhat Hanh also defines attentiveness as a key component of the desire and ability to be loving and kind.¹⁰⁹ Curatorially, a responsible and responsive outlook may be viewed as a non-presumptive, conscious receptivity and attention to a wide range of creative forces, processes, relations, and actions, individual and collective—an open-ended journey that carries room for surprise, empathy, and vulnerability, a humility based endeavour within the creative flux out of which not only art but life and society emerge and re-emerge.

¹⁰⁸ Nel Noddings, *The Maternal Factor: Two Paths to Morality* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2010): 47. Noddings locates receptive attention as an essential aspect of the constellation of processes and dispositions that constitute an ethic of care. Noddings places strong emphasis on modeling care and my focus on the ethical re/orienting and re/membering of creativity and curation is really a call to embody the kind of perception, care, and relationality that we may seek in the world. To put it simply, theoretical, historical and geographical rethinking may be important, but if curatorial relations are not democratic, open, and fair, they will not fully or deeply lead to the kind of transformative change and values that may be theoretically claimed.

¹⁰⁹ Thich Nhat Hanh, *True Love: A Practice for Awakening the Heart*, trans. Sherab Chödzin Kohn (Boston: Shambala, 2004). Hanh states: “What must a person do in order to understand a person? We must have time; we must practice looking deeply into this person. We must be there, attentive; we must observe, we must look deeply. And the fruit of this looking deeply is called understanding. Love is a true thing if it is made up of a substance called understanding” (2-3).

2.4 Rethinking Narratives of Contestation and Conceptualism

A transformative curatorial ethic is impeded by many of the key assumptions and narratives that define the contemporary artworld-academic post/industrial complex's critical image and architecture. Narratives of contestation, conceptualism, and so on are powerful aspects of this architecture¹¹⁰ and I believe they play a significant role in constraining individual and collective democratic connection to creative power and potential. Through rethinking conceptualism, my aim is to begin to re-vision the intellectual, social and institutional reproductive process of curation.

Critics like Paul O'Neill and Mick Wilson argue "if one looks, however summarily, at the diverse strategies that curatorial discourse has opened up, it is apparent that the discourse has operated as a rhetorical matrix providing for the appearance of a range of new and critical practices."¹¹¹ O'Neill and Wilson point out that "curatorial discourse has done so by...re-instating a sense of individual and collective agency through a range of animating metaphors and theoretical positions: from DIY [do-it-yourself] culture to DJ [disc-jockey] culture; postproduction to informal networking; dialogical aesthetics to discursive practice."¹¹² Unfortunately, the parameters of any kind of curatorial engagement, including those opening out

¹¹⁰ Narratives such as conceptualism may be viewed as part of the "tacit infrastructure of knowledge" in the high artworld. For a thoughtful exploration of the "tacit infrastructure of knowledge" in the context of scientific practice, see David Bohm and F. David Peat, "Revolutions, Theories, and Creativity in Science," in *Science, Order and Creativity*, 15-62.

¹¹¹ Paul O' Niell and Mick Wilson, "Curatorial Practice and the Contested Trope of Emergence." *Ica.org*. Institute of Contemporary Arts, n.d. Web. 29 Jun. 2010.

¹¹² Ibid.

into wider societal landscapes in the bitsphere and biosphere,¹¹³ are still powerfully policed by and/or entrenched within the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. The extraterritoriality, collaboration, and de-centring often claimed under a postmodern or postcolonial position remain deeply sanitized and predictably contained within interconnected networks and spheres of academic knowledge production and cultural capital formation. These entangled networks, through practices of gate-keeping and entitlement, unaccountable procedures, and self-referential structures, shape the contours of creative and archival speculation and legitimation under the sign of Empire.¹¹⁴ These networks are part of Empire's protean capitalist capacity to "develop itself more deeply, to be reborn, and to extend itself throughout the biopolitical lattice of world society."¹¹⁵ Picture a vast field where so many different kinds of activities and practices are

¹¹³ I employ the terms biosphere and bitsphere as Ursula Franklin defines them: "...the term biosphere...include[s] not only living creatures and their biological support systems, but also the physical and mental artifacts attesting to their presence on Earth....The bitsphere is seen as the sphere of storage, display, and transmittal of information or data in BIT." See Ursula Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*, rev. ed. (Toronto: House of Anansi Press, 1999): 165-66.

¹¹⁴ I am deploying "empire" to indicate, as Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri do, that there is a dominant mode of thinking, governance, and economic and social relations today that is no longer confined to a particular dominant nation or colonial power. Hardt and Negri describe Empire as a "*decentred* and *detrterritorializing* apparatus of rule that progressively incorporates the entire global realm within its open, expanding frontiers" (2). See *Empire* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2000).

¹¹⁵ Ibid. 41. I disagree with the concept of all pervasive bio-power that Michel Foucault has theorized, finding it lacking in the acknowledgement of the ethical and transformative possibilities of human thought and action. Nonetheless, I am deploying the concept of the biopolitical via Hardt and Negri to make the point that knowledge systems and cultural practices become commodified and circulate with greater ease and spectacle for specific reasons. One key criteria of remaining in the game in the artworld-academia post/industrial complex is to either sufficiently reproduce or not accountably enough challenge asymmetries of power and legitimated artworld-academic ontologies and epistemologies. I view the undertaking of a particular practice or inhabitation of a particular knowledge system as involving personal responsibility, not solely a socialized constitution or imposition, what Foucault calls discursive production. For a detailed socio-ethical critique of Foucault's work and ideas, see Nancy Fraser, *Unruly*

underway, there seems to be so much contestation and exchange—a point that O’Neill and Wilson make about curatorial practice. Yet from a broader purview, like a satellite snapshot, gazing with alternate ontological and epistemological lenses, I argue one can observe a strong curatorial arrow formed by currents of power-over social relations, flowing along the directions and visions of capital and coloniality.

To illustrate how my ontological and epistemological lenses assist such a snapshot, I will start with critically analyzing a key “commandment” of legitimated critical contemporary art: though shalt be conceptual. For example, everything in the environment or in daily life can enter the realm of legitimated art, artifact or curation through “concept” or “idea” as a primary, organizing tool. Labor and creative value is often inflated and appropriated by claiming authorship, aura, intellect, and status through supremacy of a concept behind one’s artistic work or what is termed an “intervention.” Instead of non-presumptive openness to the activations of creativity by a person or community, and ethically responsive translation of these activations across intellectual-creative, ancestral, and social landscapes, art historical and visual arts discourses often impose meaning and form through codified and atomized conceptions of “painting,” “literature,” “installation,” “performance,” etc. Art historical narratives that perpetuate art as representation rather than a creative form of embodied reality and relationships promote disconnection to the transformative possibilities of creative thought, idea, and action. Through this disconnection, “objecthood” or “concept” or “visualness” become unmoored markers and can then be “critically” imposed within cleverness generating artworld and curatorial narratives, obfuscating the nature of creative power and potential.

Practices: Power, Discourse, and Gender in Contemporary Social Theory (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1989): 17-68.

For example, a “painting” on a wall is never only that—it may invoke spatio-temporalities, process, histories, and memories that are alive and present and interactive with/in diverse human and more-than-human¹¹⁶ cultural ecologies. Social interplay, texture and life are indeed part and parcel of any creative act and terrain. The imagination of a particular “media” or “type” of art and the curatorial arbitration of its critical and creative valence are, however, well policed by artworld conceptualist discourse. The vibrancy, aliveness, and border-crossing possibilities of creativity and concept-practices that do not arise from familiar to dominant philosophical-narrative turf of the artworld are often “disappeared”—epistemic and ontic violence.

Conceptualism as a mode of thought¹¹⁷ has thus in many ways become a clever, easily mutable, disavowing way of shaping and policing cultural production under a hyperreal

¹¹⁶ I first encountered the phrase “more-than-human,” derived from David Abram’s work, in Carol Gigliotti, “Sustaining Creativity and Losing the Wild,” *Educating Artists in a Digital Age: Learning at the Intersections of Art, Science, Technology and Culture*, ed. M. Alexenberg (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2008): 61-74. I deploy the term “more-than-human” sometimes interchangeably with non-human. Other times, I deploy the term to specifically highlight that what is considered human is deeply interconnected with and shaped by the non-human, challenging human dichotomizations as well as speciesism. I am grateful to Daniel Heath Justice for also introducing me to the work of Graham Harvey. Harvey prefers other-than-human, arguing it has the benefit of not making humans some kind of yardstick for personhood. See Graham Harvey, *Animism: Respecting the Living World* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2006). My view is that all three turns of phrase—nonhuman, more-than-human, and other-than-human—depending on the intention and context of activation can be respectfully deployed.

¹¹⁷ Engaging conceptualism as a mode of thought in the artworld complex, rather than a historical art movement, allows me to address reification of creativity and resistance that is applicable to current permutations of conceptualist logic, whether it morphs into “relational aesthetics” or “postconceptual” artworks. For example, art historian Stewart Martin has thoughtfully argued that a dialectic position is necessary where there is neither repression of the truth of the pervasive cooptation of art in its object as well as relational orientation nor of the critical power art can carry in terms of disruption in either orientation. See Stewart Martin, “Critique of Relational Aesthetics,” *Third Text* 21.4 (2007): 368-386. However, despite Martin’s nuanced stance, the dualizing of objecthood and relationality—what I consider

simulacrum of “criticality.” Intellectual claiming through conceptualism provides institutional access and mobility while preserving potentially quite vague and unaccountable notions of dissent and decentring of power. In “Conceptual Transformations of Art,” Jacob Lillemose discusses how “ ‘de’ in the term dematerialization [of the art object] refers to a conceptual...approach to materiality” and conceptual art thus opposes “control, power and capitalistic exploitation.”¹¹⁸ By dematerialization of the art object, Lillemose is referring to how art can now conceptually integrate with the everyday and does not need to be localized within an “object.” This dematerialization is viewed by critics like Lillemose as a critical response to capitalism through undermining the ability to exchange an artistic object in the marketplace thereby offering liberation from commodity logic. In contrast, I agree with Marina Vishmidt’s argument that through conceptualism the “commodity form is not so much eliminated” but “diffused, over the whole of relations constituting the productive (and consumptive) process.”¹¹⁹ I view conceptualism, especially within a eurocentric, globally dominant art network, as reflective of a dynamic of postindustrial capitalism in which creative labor and value is diffused and then more widely extracted and commodified through an administrative and information-knowledge oriented process of “immaterial” exploitation. Knowledge, intellect, creative “performance,” “installation,” “intervention,” any set of relationships or participation within the artworld-academia post/industrial complex, can easily circulate as a cultural commodity today,

part of hegemonic conceptualist logic—carries ontological reductionism; commodification is made central to art; and these debates are seen to be *defining* of the route sociality has and may come to take in art.

¹¹⁸ Jacob Lillemose, “Conceptual Transformations of Art: From Dematerialization of the Object to Immateriality in Networks,” in *Curating Immateriality: The Work of the Curator in the Age of the Network Systems*, ed. Joasia Krysa (Brooklyn: Autonomedia, 2006): 116-117.

¹¹⁹ Marina Vishmidt, “Twilight of the Widgets,” in *Curating Immateriality*, 43.

in/forming the protean colonial-capitalist terms and relations within which codified conceptual art functions. The persistent need and demand in the artworld/academia complex for hegemonically and almost compulsively documenting and narrating even the most “dematerialized” practice re/introduces or re/materializes artistic objectification of self, relationships, everyday life, and labor. And although artists are not generally expected to wage-labor or salary-labour within the artworld context,¹²⁰ except if they hold an academic position, this does not imply that their cultural labour is liberated from the control and authority of capital. The budgets of installations in major galleries and biennales and commissioned projects are extravagant, and even when the artistic work does not involve capital intensive input, it is expected to garner enough cultural capital over time to become sufficiently monetized through private or public grants and awards, accumulative market value, residency or teaching positions, etc. As Vishmidt incisively comments, “just as the tendency to dispense with the art object barely dented the position of art production within the art market and commodity relations more generally, the restructuration from industrial to semiotic¹²¹ labour does not spell the end of work.”¹²² The perpetuated myth and critical self-image in knowledge and cultural industries relating to how conceptualism fights “control, power, and capitalist exploitation”¹²³ thus needs serious reevaluation.

¹²⁰ This point regarding artists within the “high” artworld fold is not to be confused with artists who struggle outside of such folds to subsist on their art practice. Majority of artists do not function or function only in part within the artworld context—only a small fraction get access/opportunities within this context and many do not even think about or attempt to be part of it.

¹²¹ Semiotic refers to cultural signs and systems.

¹²² Vishmidt, 43.

¹²³ Lillemose, 117.

Conceptualism is incredibly compatible with capital, shifting, mutating, owning, packaging and commodifying without fundamentally disrupting ontologies and epistemologies of colonial modernity and postmodernity. Thus it is important to ask which creative process and practice, as energized by any peoples on the planet, is not conceptual and intellectual? No social labour is devoid of the possibilities and activations of creativity, no art or creative process is devoid of intellectual and conceptual labour, and all life journeys are connected in some way to understanding, theorizing and negotiating social and creative worlds.¹²⁴ Creativity is thus not to be largely imagined and accessed as a reified conceptual entity in the service of capital and its coloniality, as coded in hyperreal western avant-gardism and dominant narratives of modernity and postmodernity. Conceptualism in an open sense has existed throughout human and non-human history, and certainly was not discovered by any particular artist or tradition. Although artistic legacies and histories as codified in artworld narratives may be rich and exciting to many, what inspires and informs the creativity of individuals and communities is incalculably vast, making artworld narratives a microscopic drop in a billion oceans. There are innumerable ways of theorizing, thinking and being in the world, and decolonizing imaginings and inhabitations of culture-making or “together-doing”¹²⁵ can open up plethoric realities and innumerable

¹²⁴ The separation of physical and intellectual labor is central to capital and to caste and class politics; it is important to learn from the doing, what Christian Bay calls “critical empiricism” and Kwame Anthony Appiah calls “experiments in living.” See Appiah, *Experiments in Ethics* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2008) and Bay, *Strategies of Political Emancipation* (Notre Dame: University of Notre Dame Press, 1981). For a powerful articulation of learning from labour see Kancha Illiah, *Why I am Not a Hindu: A Shudra Critique of Hinduvta Philosophy, Culture, and Political Economy* (Calcutta: Samya, 1996).

¹²⁵ Forbes, “Nature and Culture.”

possibilities not only for scholarly consideration but to inform individuals and communities in how they relate to each other and the world at large.

In this chapter, I demonstrated ways in which policing, imposition, presumption, and disconnection still continue in the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. I developed my position via a critique of Documenta XI, conceptualism, and other curatorial and critical practices and theoretical visions that hold significant sway in artworld and academic contexts. Constructively, I emphasized the importance of interconnection and relationship as the context within which criticality needs to enjoy a contextually important role as a part of a larger ecology of personal responsibility and accountability, care and integrity. I also advanced my main premise: the public reason of curation as the enhancing of love and care, tied to the democratic bases of curation in ways of knowing, being, and doing that support the flourishing of individual and collective human and non-human creativity.¹²⁶ Connective curatorial reason can meaningfully inform relations and practices within and outside of professional contexts and encourages the accountability of curation to ethical-transformative bases of creativity, wholly and cohesively understood.

¹²⁶ My connective curatorial reason contrasts with and also carries different inflections than recent books on curation that ground it as an experimental mode of thought and practice that mediates art and contemporary experience. Specifically, see Terry Smith, *Thinking Contemporary Curating* (New York: Independent Curators International, 2012) and Paul O'Neill, *The Culture of Curating and the Curating of Culture(s)* (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2012). Smith locates contemporary curation as the practice of exhibiting contemporaneity, to facilitate its experience in various settings and activities. O'Neill sees curation as a distinct mode of mediation of art, irrespective of the open boundaries of art today.

Chapter 3: Curatorial Responsibility and the Imagination of Culture

Curatorial narratives of culture influence its public imagination and activation. It is thus a pertinent aspect of curatorial responsibility to inquire: What stories about culture are we telling? What are the ethical and social implications of these stories?

In this chapter, I further inhabit as well as expand curation as an ethic of care by developing an integrative, connective understanding of culture that supports socio-ethical cohesiveness and congruence. My aim is to make palpable the very practical and grounded interconnection and interdependency between culture as participatory consciousness and reality¹²⁷ and the deeply responsive task of human and earth flourishing.

By rethinking the idea of culture as well as notions of the aesthetic closely associated with it, I seek to clarify and extend public reasons and reasoning for conceiving of curation openly and democratically—to make visible the ethical potential of curatorial agency in diverse facets of experience, perception, and relationship. My desire is to provide a compelling vision that encourages curators to transparently and caringly engage questions of value, public reason, and responsibility as they impact artistic interpretation and engagement, interpersonal and institutional orientations and processes, as well as societal visions and narratives.

3.1 Introductory Thoughts on an Integrative, Ethical Conception of Culture

In this chapter, I begin by contrasting the notion of culture articulated by humanities scholar Edward Said with my own conceptualizations. My reasoning in contrasting my vision with Said's is that his epistemic stance on culture and aesthetics carries significant influence, whether in part or whole, in academia as well as the artworld. For example, variations of the notion of culture as "the best that has been known and thought"¹²⁸ (Said's view) can be found in constructs of artistic excellence in funding, collecting, and exhibiting bodies, in how claims of

¹²⁷ I understand how the term reality can be seen as a loaded term and construct. I deploy it here with care and for a specific purpose – to highlight that I comprehend reality not as a mechanical process, but as interwoven with perception, feeling, and agency.

¹²⁸ Edward Said, "Introduction," *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage Books, 1993): xii.

greatness are articulated around canonized artists, historical or contemporary, etc. Additionally, aesthetics continues to be widely deployed as a way of distinguishing the cultural sphere versus a broader form of perception and relationship that informs all aspects of life and society. In some way, the very bordering of the field of art history and of the parameters of the artworld rest on a rarefied aesthetic positioning, even if, at times, at face value, a Saidian kind of aesthetic discourse can seem obscured, diffused, or tangential in these arenas.

In addition, in the public sphere, the Saidian idea of culture—culture as involving “the cream of the crop” or superior methods of thinking and artistic creation, as an avenue and context primarily involving the seeking of pleasure, and as aesthetically irreconcilable with everyday life—enjoys popularity and support. I posit an alternative construct of culture, culture as living, open inquiry, rooted in the non-deterministic bases of consciousness in which emotions and aesthetics play integral roles.

Said expresses his understanding of culture as follows:

As I use the word, “culture” means two things in particular. First of all it means those practices, like the arts of description, communication, and representation, that have relative autonomy from the economic, social and political realms and that often exist in aesthetic forms, one of whose principal aims is pleasure. Included, of course, are both the popular stock of lore about distant parts of the world and specialized knowledge available in such learned disciplines as ethnography, historiography, philology, sociology, and literary history.

...Second, and almost imperceptibly, culture is a concept that includes a refining and elevating element, each society’s reservoir of the best that has been known and thought....¹²⁹

With regard to culture, I carry significantly different vision, understanding, and orientation than Said. I do not conceive of culture as distinct or relatively autonomous from social, political, and economic realms. I rather understand the delineation of these realms as constructed forms of division of socio-cultural relations and labor; these realms are part and parcel of culture, integratively conceived. Culture, in my viewpoint, rests in the co-participatory or together-doing

¹²⁹ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xii.

nature of consciousness, perceptionality, and agency—a democratic, living commons involving human and more-than-human individuals and communities. As well, in contrast to the evaluative framework of “the best that has been known and thought” as well as generalized emphasis on the pursuit of pleasure as one of the main goals of culture,¹³⁰ I seek to posit an ethical orientation to the concept-practice of culture. An orientation connected to perceiving, relating, and acting that deepens our aliveness and awakens and encourages this in others. Making ethicality important to the endeavor of culture-making allows for a visioning of culture that is not only integrative but also connective. A bringing together of an integrative and connective understanding of culture opens up the transformative potential of pursuing value-based as well as public responsibility and creativity-related interconnection among differentiated social spheres.¹³¹ The development of such a cohesive outlook on culture assists in expanding the intricacy and transparency of socio-epistemic narratives and transformative thought-reason-emotion-action, not only in relation to art but also science, law, etc.

Said’s consideration of culture creates atomization between living and culture-making by viewing aesthetics as “intensely in a state of unreconciled opposition to the depredations of

¹³⁰ Said, *Culture and Imperialism*, xii.

¹³¹ When positing an integrative understanding of culture, I have often encountered queries regarding the place for specialization in my framework. I appreciate the need for and contributions of specialization in various human endeavours; at the same time, even the most specialized efforts can benefit from being democratically engaged in terms of public responsibility, public good, and public reason.

In addition, as philosophers of science David Bohm and F. David Peat have aptly pointed out, specialization and division of labor do not have to lead to fragmentation. I agree with them that fragmentation rather arises when the way knowledge is compartmentalized or work is organized discounts connections across fields or distorts the wholeness of the context/order in question. See *Science, Order, and Creativity*.

everyday life.”¹³² For Said, aesthetics is comprised of forms and ways of communication, description, etc., that mediate life. In becoming a boundary between life and representation, the aesthetic dimension becomes a way of articulating knowledge, art, and culture in strongly representational or symbolic terms. In my view, culture *is* life and world navigation and making, and communication, representation, description, etc., are constitutive of everyday life, neither epiphenomenal nor unreconciled to it. Ecologies of culture and reality are conterminous, situated not as mechanistic but as interwoven with perception, feeling, and agency. For instance, culture can be understood as dynamically taking place moment-to-moment, as consciousness and movement, involving aspects, among others, of mental and physical perception-response. In terms of the context within which culture is activated, this movement can be connected to a person’s inner life, to the communities and places they participate within, as well as viewed as occurring in an earth wide web or other orders of interrelationality.

Rather than holding onto the normative idea that pleasure is the primary experiential and emotional aspect of culture, it is enlightening to consider the entire spectrum of human emotions as necessary to both an understanding of and the constitution of culture.¹³³ Anger, fear, shame, pride,

¹³² See *Humanism and Democratic Criticism*, 63. Said also views the aesthetic as “the uncontrolled mystery on the bestial floor” (63). I can relate to mystery as part of creativity. I am also aware of how brutal and unjust the world is in so many ways. At the same time, there is love and care in the world – I cannot relate to the world as a “bestial floor” and the art in aesthetic form rising above this reality. I think art can be as numb and violent as there can be numbness and violence in the world at large. Also, mystery and goodness have to be present, whether in the heart and imagination of an artist or that which inspires the artist for them to be able to be expressed in art.

¹³³ I am challenging a specific construct of pleasure in the context of culture—the idea of pleasure as being removed from the everyday, as resting in rarefied aesthetics, or primarily in entertainment. I do think, however, that pleasure and joy can be articulated differently—connectively in relation to consciousness and value, human and more-than-human. For example, Marc Bekoff and Jessica Pierce highlight in *Wild Justice* that play is a pleasurable way of learning the value of fairness and cooperation, empathy and trust

envy, gratitude, love, compassion, and any other emotion, if embraced as part of intimacy and inquiry into diverse elements of human psyche and engagement, can encourage transformative personal and social awareness. Such awareness is both an instigator of and a powerful aspect of internal and interpersonal honesty, growth and movement, which may be understood as integrative, embodied processes and forms of ethical practice. Culture is often collapsed in an atomized manner with the artistic and intellectual—as if it is merely in art galleries and opera and books that culture is to be found—rather than creativity and intelligence being seen as immanent currents within a river of learning, knowing and being. It is due to this kind of narrow conception of culture, and associated ways of conceptualizing intellect and artistic effort, that pleasure, rather than responsiveness, has come to be seen as so important to culture.

Culture as a form of living inquiry, one in which emotions play a dynamic role, forms part of my open and cohesive vision of culture. Public reason and responsibility further illuminate and bridge social spheres, expanding the ethical, democratic bases of cohesive culture-making. I will demonstrate the importance of such an exploration and understanding with reference to the work of Ursula Franklin and Martha Nussbaum in the arenas of science and law respectively. Franklin, as a scientist deeply concerned with issues of peace and justice, in

in animals, including humans. Bekoff and Pierce refer to ethologist Jonathan Balcombe assessment that “pleasure is ‘one of the blessings of evolution.’ It’s one of the ways nature rewards adaptive behaviour. Humans (especially the Puritans among us) may think that morality and pleasure are opposing forces; anything fun is also undoubtedly naughty. Yet nature knows better” (125-126).

Pleasure, play and creativity are also connected. Bohm and Peat in *Science, Order, and Creativity* foreground free play as an important aspect of creativity: “Thought is generally considered to be a sober and weighty business. But here it is being suggested that creative play is an essential element in forming new hypotheses and ideas. Indeed, thought which tries to avoid play is in fact playing false with itself. Play it appears is the very essence of thought” (48-49). Intricate nuances of joy and ethics, of play and thought, can be accommodated well under the concept of responsiveness.

“Reflections on Science and the Citizen,” points out that one does not have to do science to know the principles or workings of science well.¹³⁴ She emphasizes that science can be understood with ease by citizens assisting them in better evaluating many kinds of knowledge claims as well as carefully scrutinizing the role and direction of science in society—participating more effectively and fully as citizens.¹³⁵ Franklin thoughtfully points out that scientists are many a time not aware of the bigger social context or impact of their work.¹³⁶ In other words, scientists need to think about what it means to do science as citizens, not solely as scientists.¹³⁷

Martha Nussbaum in *Disgust to Humanity: Sexual Orientation and Constitutional Law* points out that law, for it to carry strong moral resonance, has to be humane—it cannot expand or contribute to justice on legal principles or arguments alone but needs to rely on imagination, on sympathy, on curiosity that enables compassion and insight into the lives and contexts of others.¹³⁸ She argues that such a politics of humanity is relevant for constitutional law “precisely because it concerns the most fundamental entitlements we all have as citizens, the most basic and general ways in which we make sense of our common political life and articulate its deepest purposes.”¹³⁹ Nussbaum astutely points out that judges interpreting constitutional law “need to try to be human beings, seeking to understand the issues in their historical and cultural setting and with an eye to the human meanings they embody.”¹⁴⁰ Through expanding their moral

¹³⁴ “Reflections on Science and the Citizen” in *Pacifism as a Map*, 316-317.

¹³⁵ Ibid. , 316.

¹³⁶ Ibid. , 317.

¹³⁷ Ibid.

¹³⁸ See Nussbaum, “Preface: From Disgust to Humanity,” in *Disgust to Humanity: Sexual Orientation and Constitutional Law* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2010): xii-xxiv.

¹³⁹ Ibid. , xxi.

¹⁴⁰ Ibid.

imagination, they can help further respect and equality through state-based law.¹⁴¹ This is an example of the domain of law, and in the case of Franklin, the domain of science, being constructed within a broader ecology of connective ethics and imagination—an accountability to sensitive, caring together-doing. Law and science in important ways are thus not outside an integrative, democratic conception of culture in relation to ethics or epistemology. Thinking democratically concerning epistemology—of how processes of learning and teaching, responding and participating—whether in terms of carefully observing and verifying knowledge as in science or regulating conflict and organizing community as in law, for instance—assists in making visible how various kinds of epistemologies are already present in historical and contemporary together-doings of diverse communities.¹⁴² An integrative conception of culture can thus be ethically very powerful in linking cognitive justice to social justice¹⁴³ in that it assists

¹⁴¹ Nussbaum gives several examples of legal cases wherein such moral imagination is exercised, furthering what she terms “a politics of humanity.” One specific example from United States’ legal history that Nussbaum discusses in this regard is *Lawrence vs Texas*, see Ibid. , 85-89.

¹⁴² To give an example, Kanien’kehaka scholar Patricia Monture, specifically addressing epistemic colonialism in the context of Canada, points out how dominant society may “accept that Aboriginal peoples have politics (albeit perhaps not fully) but do not recognize that we equally have theologies, epistemologies, knowledge systems, pedagogy and history. These are all collapsed into mere ‘perspective,’” See Patricia Monture-Angus, “To Break with the Past: Searching for the Meaning of Self-determination,” in *Journeying Forward: Dreaming First Nations’ Independence* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1999): 28.

¹⁴³ A corollary to epistemological democratization and decolonization is a heterogeneous understanding of social structures and their histories. In terms of social structuring, the political project of modernity is connected to how the economy, political representation, nationhood and other forms of social infrastructure are dominantly organized or expected to function today. As colonialism has been a constitutive aspect of modernity, Walter D. Mignolo argues that “the decolonial shift” has to include the effort to start seeing “[modernity] as a European construction of history in Europe’s own interests.” Walter D. Mignolo, *The Idea of Latin America* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishing, 2005): xix. At the same time as the colonial-modern social process has been a global project, the European experience of modernity may be viewed as one instance of it, not as its centre. For example, struggles for decolonization

in illuminating the epistemic participation of diverse individuals and communities in the imagination and practice of law, science, art and other key modes of socio-epistemic structuring.

My purpose in rethinking culture includes creating wide-open space for curatorial reflection and living inquiry. Specifically, I wish curatorial inquiries to give attentive

and national liberation, as well as ongoing daily and systemic resistance of peoples to colonial rule also gave birth to simultaneous modernity/ities i.e. how people came to negotiate and assert themselves with/in structures like the nation-state and industrial capital in ways specific to community, social context, place, and worldview. In other words, modernity, though it is certainly constituted through the coercive experiences and violent relations of colonialism and imperialism, has not been a univocal process—it has and continues to involve multifaceted translations within and outside of Europe.

My contention is that plural conceptions of modernity/ies are very useful but not sufficient—ways of knowing and being that are rooted in memories, histories, legacies and paradigms that inscribe the earth in worldviews other than modernity while desiring to shape the ongoing encounter with modernity from a self-determining position and trajectory also need constitutional acknowledgement and engagement. By constitutional I mean two things—the very basis of society as well as the legal codification of this bases. A very clear-eyed, thoughtful, and rich exploration of how plural worldviews and traditions—specifically Indigenous worldviews and traditions in Canada—need to, in some ways already are, and can further co-exist socially and legally with Canadian traditions of law and broader collective aspirations is to be found in John Borrows, *Canada's Indigenous Constitution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010).

For a recent summary of latest debates around modernity and alternate modernities in the humanities and social sciences, see Ines Eben v. Racknitz “Report on a Conference: ‘Varieties of Modernity? Possibilities and Limitations of a Research Perspective on Asia and Europe, International Conference, Zurich, 8-10 September 2009.” *H-net.org*. H-ASIA, 5 Mar. 2010. Web. 12 Aug. 2010. For a thoughtful articulation of how modernity was globally constituted through colonialism, thus there being no need to essentialize differences between west and non-west through the concept of alternate modernities—rather European experience of modernity is best viewed as one of many rather than being conceded preeminence—see Sylvester Okwunodu Ogbechie, *Ben Enwonwu: The Making of an African Modernist* (Rochester: University of Rochester Press, 2008).

In summary, modes of sovereignty, law, trade, knowledge, and governance already existed within communities prior to “contact” and euro-modernities. To evacuate these histories through either centralizing modernity or inscribing it eurocentrically invisibilizes the diversity of the historico-structural ground from which struggles for substantive autonomy and democratization may gather strength and insight.

consideration to artistic and socio-cultural worldviews, contexts, practices, and spaces without prior assumptions based solely on disciplinary training, education, artworld norms, etc. It is incredibly important for curators to really listen and to listen with breath. In J. Krishnamurti's eloquent summation, there is a profound difference between listening "merely to have confirmation, to be encouraged in your own thinking" compared to "listening to find out."¹⁴⁴ When the urge is "to find out," Krishnamurti asserts, "your mind is free, not committed to anything; it is very acute, sharp, alive, inquiring, curious, and hence capable of discovery."¹⁴⁵ My integrative, ethical conception of culture is a way of emphasizing that rather than thinking of listening, witnessing, exchanging, and growing as external to our curatorial tasks of exhibition, interpretation, facilitation, evaluation, we need to seriously pay attention to our ways of relating and being as they profoundly impact and shape the curatorial task of creative sustenance, wholly and cohesively understood. I also wish to illuminate the need for curators to be emotionally self-aware and attentive to the role emotions play in how others contextually engage with the world, artistically and socially.

My hope is for there to be stronger integration in the hearts, minds, spirits, and practices of curators that curation, understood as facilitating creativity, is constantly taking place all around us, by individuals, communities, nature, and cosmos. This larger curatorial order does not discount the importance of what we professionally do as curators; it imbues our choices and actions, the narratives we tell and the relations we cultivate with a deeper and wider sense of public reason and responsibility. This broader vision is a call for curation to be involved in the public sphere in a renewed way, the modeling of an ethic of caring responsiveness and connective engagement.

¹⁴⁴ J. Krishnamurti, "Listening," in *In Think on These Things*, ed. D. Rajagopal (New York: Harper and Row: 1964): 37.

¹⁴⁵ Ibid.

3.2 Conceptualizing Aesthetics within an Integrative Framework of Culture

In this section, I explore how aesthetics can be understood as holistic ways we give shape and form to experience and as the cohesive ordering of the expressiveness and responsiveness of consciousness-relation-action. Within such a conception, notions of form and structure, already strongly associated with the aesthetic, can be re/imagined as experiential-relational dynamics that shape sociality, ecology, and cosmos. The shaping and forming of experience is a co-creative, public endeavour and in keeping with my ethical imagination of culture, I foreground the importance of personal and social integrity and responsibility to aesthetic processes of meaning-making. This rethinking of the aesthetic supports my aim of contributing to curatorial practice that is expansive with regard to consideration of and claims made in relation to art and/or culture and how one situates these with respect to bio-cultural ecologies.¹⁴⁶

The imagination of aesthetics, whether consciously evoked or activated as an immersed aspect of worldview and positionality, significantly shapes perception and evaluation of artistic practice. Curators often make choices and develop narratives that carry a strong aesthetic dimension. I seek to make aesthetic dimensions explicit so that they can be part of more open, collaborative reflection and scrutiny. I believe this scrutiny carries rich potential to deepen the consciousness and accountability of the work we do as curators in the artworld and beyond.

Aesthetics, in common usage, is often associated with notions of beauty, how one may find

¹⁴⁶ I think it is both more inclusive and accurate to characterize and engage together-doing contexts as fields of “biocultural diversity.” This involves taking the material intelligence and creativity of the nonhuman as well as human worlds seriously as cultural intelligence and creativity versus dualizing or hierarchizing the two.

For organizations and communities doing exciting working in the field of biocultural diversity, see Terra Lingua: Unity in Biocultural Diversity <<http://www.terralingua.org>> as well as BCLS Group: BioCultural Landscapes & Seascapes<<https://plus.google.com/communities/110834970079444098643>>.

the look and feel of something pleasing to their sensibilities, and what one considers as the structure of art and the artistic.¹⁴⁷ My aim in this section is to critically and constructively address various meanings and evocations associated with aesthetics, generally and philosophically. Whether it is an understanding of beauty, or exploration of the role of the body and senses in relation to living, or the question of artistic and aesthetic evaluation and discernment, I aim to share how a connective view of experience and ethics provides a cohesive and expansive framework for aesthetics.

Before discussing in some detail specific elements of aesthetics, for example notions of beauty or the question of artistic judgment, I would like to first sketch out my particular imagination of the aesthetic. After doing so, I will explore various concerns that fall under the rubric of the aesthetic while spotlighting my re/visioning. I see aesthetics as the creative experience and process of giving order and meaning, whether through art and language or values and perception. Another reflection of the same understanding of the aesthetic is order emerging and being created and refigured via multiscale,¹⁴⁸ multidirectional interactions between and among social, ecological and physical actors. For example, the co-evolution of fig trees and pollinating wasps, an ongoing mutualism¹⁴⁹ with a history of millions of years,¹⁵⁰ may also be viewed as an aesthetic process.

¹⁴⁷ This general notion of the aesthetic continues to inform artworld-academic terrains in that personal sensibilities of artists and curators are affected by the kind of social and creative sensibilities promulgated by a connected network of education, criticism, tightly condoned exchange, and artworld-academic co-participation.

¹⁴⁸ By multiscale, I wish to suggest different scales of time, different purviews and orders of context and interaction, including local and global whether in terms of cell and the body or region and world, cosmic, ecological, micro, macro ways of orienting, etc.

¹⁴⁹ Mutualism is one major kind of plant-animal interaction. For an accessible introduction to a broad range of such interactions, see Carlos M. Herrera and Olle Pellmyr, eds., *Plant-Animal Interactions: An Evolutionary Approach* (Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell, 2009). It is interesting to note that Herrera and Pellmyr introduce the collection by declaring that “more than a century of subsequent research [since Darwin] in ecology and evolution has confirmed...beyond any doubt that we will never fully understand

Fig-wasp mutualism marks intergenerational continuity of cooperation between various species of wasps and over seven hundred and fifty varieties of figs, involving physical, social, and biochemical communication in the service of co-flourishing. This mutualism constitutes an astute and attuned expression of reciprocity. The biological/*form*-based processes of figs and wasps are concomitant cultural and valuational processes and relations—being cognizant of the interrelatedness of materiality and together-doing assisting in comprehending this. Research material I accessed mentions that there are only one to three wasps that are anatomically and socially specific to each species of fig.¹⁵¹ In the process of giving birth to their young within the fruit of the fig tree, the wasps also pollinate the trees. To assist with this process, wasps have, through co-evolution, developed special pouches in order to carry fig pollen. In turn, the fig fruit is intricately responsive to the wasps, having developed an opening for the entry of wasps that shares likeness with a lock and a key—only species of wasps that carry intergenerational relations can enter. This intricate, responsive set of relations and cross-species social pact that

the evolution of the morphology, behaviour and life history of plants and animals unless we understand in sufficient detail their reciprocal influence in ecological and evolutionary time” (viii). I see the biological perspective as confirming the role of relationship and interconnectivity in development of mind, body, and community, wherein community is inclusive of everything in an ecosystem.

¹⁵⁰ For a discussion of fig-wasp mutualism, including a mention of the multidirectional aspect of this mutualism (247), see James M. Cook and Jean-Yves Rasplus “Mutualists with Attitude: Coevolving fig wasps and figs,” *Trends in Ecology and Evolution* 18.5 (2003): 241-248.

¹⁵¹ All the information shared here on figs and wasps comes from two sources: a radio interview with Dr. Steven Compton and a reference website on fig and wasp mutualism (<http://www.figweb.org/>). See Steven Compton. Interview by Bob MacDonald. *Quirks and Quarks*. Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, 10 Jun. 2010. Radio.

has been dynamically sustained for countless generations, in which form and meaning, purpose and value are entangled constitutes a living aesthetic ecology.¹⁵²

Aesthetics may be articulated as individual and collective participatory perceptions and enactions of patterns and structures, internal and external. As an interactive process that co-structures knowing and action, aesthetics becomes a meaningful element of discerning navigation of contexts and the forming of ecological habitat/human and more-than human world-making. Within a relational context, aesthetics is also interconnected to a wider ecology of perceptions, values and judgments, making it an integral aspect of social understanding and ethical positioning. Within an ethical outlook, the aesthetic dimension may be viewed as a way of being responsive in a whole manner, being consciously part of and bearing witness to the pulsating aliveness of the world. Philosopher John Dewey also points to this wholeness in *Art as Experience*, commenting that “the activities of the fox, the dog, and the thrush may at least stand as reminders and symbols of the unity of experience which so fractionalize when work is labor, and thought withdraws us from the world.”¹⁵³ What Dewey is articulating is the connection of the aesthetic to the keenness and fullness

¹⁵² The incredible biochemical and biophysical complexity of life, along with evidence of the shared cosmic history of matter and consciousness, supports reasoning for considering the earth and cosmos as carrying intelligence and order. See Theodore Roszak in “Mind in the Cosmos: Agnosticism and the Anthropic Principle” in *The Voice of the Earth* (New York: Simon Schuster, 1992): 99-135 and Thomas Nagel, *Mind and Cosmos*. They both philosophically and evidentially challenge chance or randomness as an explanation for life and value. Also, see Vine Deloria, Jr., *Spirit and Reason: Vine Deloria, Jr., Reader* (Golden: Fulcrum Publishing, 1999). In *Spirit and Reason*, Vine Deloria, Jr., makes a clear and sharp philosophical case for interrelatedness, purpose, and morality as a source of a richer and more comprehensive epistemological outlook than the psycho-physicalist reductionist paradigm of hegemonic science.

¹⁵³ Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Minton, Balch & Company, 1934): 19. For Dewey, art can be a most profound place for what he called “having an experience,” a presentness and vitality that is a

of attention, to being fully present in perception-interaction. Significantly, Dewey locates this conception of the aesthetic within what I would term as an ethical or cohesively holistic definition of experience:

Experience in the degree in which it *is* experience is heightened vitality. Instead of signifying being shut up within one's own private feelings and sensations, it signifies active and alert commerce with the world; at its height it signifies complete interpenetration of self and the world of objects and events. Instead of signifying surrender to caprice and disorder, it affords our sole demonstration of a stability that is not stagnation but rhythmic and developing. Because experience is the fulfillment of an organism in its struggles and achievements in a world of things, it is art in germ.¹⁵⁴

Dewey sees aesthetics as a continual process and realization of the cohering of meaning and the development of growth,¹⁵⁵ these being key nodes of “rhythmic and developing” forms of “stability” he refers to above. This understanding is complementary to my articulation of aesthetics as integrating forms of feeling, imagination, and structuring in acts and movements of consciousness, arising from bodily, mental, and worldly co-participation.¹⁵⁶ If aesthetics is re/imagined as vital

potential of all experience. Art can intensely embody this vitality thus reminding us of the richness and intensity that life can carry in any moment.

In my view, as artists have many other identities and their creations are emergent from how they live and imagine generally, art does not have to necessarily carry such vitality – it can be humdrum like any other form of participatory worldmaking or reflect the same mix of attention and inattention, values and reasons, that may shape any other moment in life. It is for this reason I do not connect with general grand claims about art or privilege art in terms of its creative-ethical potentialities over any other spheres of activity. The focus on creativity rather than artistic practice is thus a very deliberate choice for me in the explorations in this thesis.

¹⁵⁴ Ibid.

¹⁵⁵ These ideas are strongly present in *Art as Experience*. It was also helpful to have a sense of the importance of Dewey's work on aesthetics to his philosophical oeuvre as a whole through Thomas M. Alexander, *John Dewey's Theory of Art, Experience, and Nature: The Horizons of Feeling* (New York: State University of New York Press, 1987).

¹⁵⁶ I perceive form in a very open manner – as the conscious and dynamic way we give shape and meaning to our experiences and journeys. Dewey experiences and conceptualizes form in a related manner. In “The Natural History of Form” in *Art as Experience*, Dewey writes, “form may

forming or ordering of experience, then the question arises how this vital forming and ordering occurs across contexts and worldviews, creating space for reflection, mapping and translation of the aesthetic beyond its historical or philosophical antecedents in European Enlightenment.¹⁵⁷

The ethico-social understanding of aesthetics that I have delineated allows for the conception and exploration of a connective understanding of beauty wherein what may be perceived as beautiful may be explored in terms of its interconnection to what may be individually and collectively imagined and pursued as goodness, truth, etc. A connective understanding of beauty has strong significance to the artworld-academia complex. It is capable of generating appreciation for diverse forms of artistic practice and acknowledgement of varying reasons for artistic pursuit while maintaining a powerful ethical focus around meaning and purpose in artistic or other forms of inquiry, knowledge, and practice. Philosopher Arthur C. Danto, cognizant of contemporary art's ability to appropriate anything as art and attentive to bases of such practice in earlier efforts such as that of artist Marcel Duchamp, contends that the question of beauty or aesthetics is no longer tenable as an essential aspect of art. Danto argues that in works like Duchamp's *Fountain* (an

be...described as the operation of forces that carry the experience of an event, object, scene, and situation to its own integral fulfillment" (137). He elucidates how "the problem of discovering the nature of form is thus identical with that of discovering the means by which are effected the carrying forward of an experience to fulfillment. When we know these means, we know what form is" (137).

¹⁵⁷ For a socially conscious conception of aesthetics that is conceived in the context of community and activism, see Sharankumar Limbale, *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature: History, Controversies and Considerations*, trans. Alok Mukherjee (Hyderabad: Orient Longman, 2004). Within the Indian context, dominant conceptions of the aesthetic are rooted in Upper Caste Hindu philosophy and Limbale provides a powerful challenge to the erasure of brutal injustice against the Dalit (untouchable or oppressed) and Adivasi (Indigenous) communities through the separation of spirituality from material and social concerns in dominant Hindu philosophies of the aesthetic.

upside down urinal signed as an artwork) the aim is to “put aesthetics entirely out of play.”¹⁵⁸ He views Duchamp’s philosophical contribution as demonstrating that “aesthetic qualities cannot belong to the definition of art because the readymades failed if they were beautiful.”¹⁵⁹ In contrast, I believe aesthetics go out of play only if we carry a very narrow definition of both aesthetics and beauty, if we do not consider these categories in their interrelational bases with regard to experience and reality, conviction and value.

An example grounded in my personal life is my connection to poetry as a capacity for feeling; I do not activate or engage poetry primarily as language play, wordsmithry or as needing to

¹⁵⁸ Arthur C. Danto, “Mysticism and Aesthetics in Eliot Deutsch’s Thought” in *The Aesthetic Turn: Reading Eliot Deutsch on Comparative Philosophy*, ed. Roger T. Ames (Open Court: Chicago, 2000):11. I understand that Danto is not saying that there is no role for beauty in art, just that it can no longer sustain itself as part of the ontology of art. I take issue with Danto’s atomized and narrow understanding of beauty as well as his institutional definition of art versus looking at both connectively in terms of value. Both the ontology of art and the definition of beauty can be and need to be engaged within a wider framework.

¹⁵⁹ Ibid. Danto strongly connects the definition or ontology of art with the ability to insinuate art within theories or institutions of the artworld, social relations and conditions that shape artistic legitimacy in the present. For a contextualization of Danto’s institutional definition of art within a broader philosophical conversation, see Thomas Adajian, “The Definition of Art.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta. Stanford University, Fall 2008. Web. 29 Jan. 2012.

Danto views the opening up of the definition of art as an important unburdening; however, this very specific kind of democratization of forms of practice, dependent on institutional sanction, raises many social and ethical concerns. For example, who has access to entering the world of art theory and of being parts of its structures and practices? Access to participating in institutional spheres and narratives of art is limited to a very tiny minority of artists. I have no issue with expansiveness around who claims being an artist and I carry full generosity of perception around diverse activities that may be claimed as art. I, however, find it problematic that expansiveness is bordered within contours of institutional spheres. Creative intelligence and aesthetic vitality need recognition in life, community, and ecologies irrespective of crossings with institutional art-related terrains.

engage the history of specific ways of using historical or contemporary verse.¹⁶⁰ For me, poetry and feeling are intertwined, connected to the importance I give to my heart-centred journey in all areas of my life. I connect with the heart plane as a place of emotion, receptivity, connection, and intelligence. My heart-centred aesthetic of poetry is related to what I value and what I wish to cultivate in my life and support out in the world. When I write poetry, I do not experience it as being in an irreconcilable relationship with my everyday life or a laborious literary exercise. Poetry arises from my socio-aesthetic and ethico-aesthetic mediation of the world—it is connected to a worldview that informs the most ordinary aspects of my life.¹⁶¹

In a community context, an example of the connection of the aesthetic to experience and conviction can be found in the contemplations of Dalit¹⁶² writer, thinker and critic Sharankumar Limbale. For Limbale, freedom has a powerful aesthetic component, and he desires Dalit writers and thinkers to activate the written word to reveal Dalit realities, instigate self-respect in Dalit communities, and transform society through supporting the overturning of inequality and dehumanization, including the brutal caste system.¹⁶³ Limbale writes, “the sentiment of freedom is present in Dalit literature not only as its life essence, but also as beauty. The three values of life—equality, freedom, and solidarity—can be regarded as constituting the essence of beauty in

¹⁶⁰ The purpose of this example is not to critique other kinds of poetry or to claim that my aesthetic sense of poetry is unique. It is simply to highlight the interrelationship of aesthetics and value.

¹⁶¹ Poetry, for me, is also about conveying with clarity rather than being opaque and obscure thereby demanding mentally laborious interpretative engagement. Contextual interpretation is of course required in terms of interrelational human and social process of meaning-making and reflection.

¹⁶² Dalit is a political term, adopted by communities that have been labeled and treated as “untouchables” within the Hindu caste system. This term has also been deployed as a call for unifying various communities severely exploited within the Indian nation state.

¹⁶³ See *Towards an Aesthetic of Dalit Literature*, esp. “Dalit Literature and Aesthetics,” p. 103-121.

Dalit literature.”¹⁶⁴ Through strongly connecting the aesthetic to social and ethical commitment and consciousness, purpose and value, I believe Limbale is articulating beauty connectively. My theorization of beauty as connective pertains both to the interconnectedness of the imagination of beauty to one’s ecology of values as well as inhabitations of these values in a way that cultivates connectedness, essential to embodiment of care and justice.

The connective aesthetic I propose emerges as a form of public reason through the pursuit of ethical congruence and social cohesiveness. I have been inspired in my discussion on cohesiveness and congruence by my personal journey to be more consistent and whole in innumerable ways and by discussions with Fabiola Nabil Naguib relating to congruence in one’s thinking, choices and actions versus the easeful discomfort of cognitive dissonance. My thinking in this area has also been sparked further by David Bohm’s assertion for the need for a cohesive, not only a holistic, culture in which genuine dialogue works to create a shared or common consciousness.¹⁶⁵ Another way of articulating personally reflective and socially dialogic journeying and reasoning committed to congruence and cohesiveness is the notion of the unity of value. Specifically, I connect with Ronald Dworkin’s insight, articulated as part of an extended philosophical defense of the unity of value in *Justice for Hedgehogs*, that congruence and cohesiveness are not about systemizing thought in a way that runs counter to real life contexts and situations but more about being an authentic and self-respecting person to whom living their values genuinely matters.¹⁶⁶ The pursuit of congruence and cohesiveness involves being conscious, honest, open and reflective regarding how we come to believe what we believe

¹⁶⁴ Limbale, 119-120.

¹⁶⁵ Bohm, *On Creativity*, 138-139, 44-145.

¹⁶⁶ See Dworkin, “Dignity,” *Justice for Hedgehogs* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press): 191-218.

around our values, the content of our value-based beliefs, and how these convictions of value shape our thoughts, feelings and actions. In short, I am arguing that the pursuit of congruence and cohesiveness is an ongoing process and effort towards personal integrity. Importantly, authenticity and integrity make the figuring out, integration, as well as inhabitation of ethics a powerful aspect of personal responsibility.¹⁶⁷

Congruence and coherence are powerful imperatives to carry and deepen honesty and accountability to self and others, to sift through a mix of motivations and conflicting desires, values, reasons, and actions. Viewing aesthetics as an integral aspect of perception, imagination, values, and judgments rather than singular to atomized culture or artistic creation opens up aesthetics for reflection and understanding as part of the ethical process of cultivating congruence and coherence. As an integrative process of public reason, congruence and cohesiveness may be viewed as the pursuit of a deeper resonance between individual good, collective good, human good, and ecological good; aesthetics is a constitutive aspect of this ethical-integrative process and emergent virtues and forms of such harmony.¹⁶⁸

¹⁶⁷ I have carried a strong kinesthetic knowledge as well as keenly felt recognition that ethics has a strong personal bases, that without these bases, abstract conceptions or principles of justice lose a powerful psychological and practical anchor. Being authentic and carrying integrity are important values that have consciously shaped my living, I see them as integral aspects of my personal responsibility. Dworkin undertakes a detailed exploration of the link between authenticity and self-respect and ethics, and a conception of morality that interpretatively strongly resonates with this view of ethics. His work has helped strengthen my intellectual clarity around the interconnected bases of ethical and moral responsibility.

¹⁶⁸ When I invoke congruence and cohesiveness as a powerful aspect of personal and social responsibility, I do not have the task of transcendence or arrival in mind. What I have in mind is a constant process and effort of self and worldly awareness that instigates creative and accountable reflection on behaviour and actions, convictions and paradigms. It is a way of bringing together the carrying of immense openness

Locating the aesthetic as a form of public reason is also a meaningful way of calling for ethical and just interaction among different ways we perceive, give value, and engage with artistic process and production. It is a call to deepen the emotional, intellectual, and practical responsiveness and accountability of artistic perceptions and judgments. Aesthetics as public reason supports challenging the idea that divergent artistic interpretations arise because of the private nature of subjectivity or thought or are best understood through acquiring of familiarity, expertise or socialization into art theory. As a constructive response to claims of total subjectivity or territoriality of disciplinary or professional claims, I believe artistic interpretations greatly benefit from opening up to reflection and inquiry regarding the relationship of making art and engaging with it with our self-understanding and conceptions of personal and social responsibility. In *Justice for Hedgehogs*, in a related vein, Ronald Dworkin remarks that different interpretations of art can be better explained by the carrying of different convictions regarding the value and purpose of art and conceptions of a person's own role or responsibility in creating or furthering that value and purpose.¹⁶⁹ The key category of analysis for Dworkin is value. In my

through curiosity and creativity with the need to be ethical and just in the task of mutual interaction and learning, challenging as well as inspiring each other to be better human beings.

¹⁶⁹ Dworkin, *Justice for Hedgehogs*, 134. In a different vein, sociologist Pierre Bordieu has argued that “the question of the meaning and the value of the work of art, like the questions of specificity of aesthetic judgment, along with all the great problems of philosophical aesthetics, can only be resolved within a social history of the field, along with a sociology of the conditions of the establishment of the specific aesthetic disposition (or attitude) that the field calls for in each one of its states” (258). I do not contest the importance of historical awareness to questions of the aesthetic or the impact of history on the institutional and social conditions that shape the aesthetic in what Bourdieu calls “the field of cultural production.” See *The Field of Cultural Production: Essays on Art and Literature*, ed. Randal Johnson (New York: Columbia University Press, 1993). My position is that art and life do not carry meaning and value exclusively in their historical and sociological bases; this would be too narrow a way of conceiving of the purpose of both art and life. Further, how we view history and the constitution of social relations

view, one of the many benefits of a value-based approach to the aesthetic is that it makes artistic engagement, not only a disciplinary or professional concern, but one that gathers meaningful illumination and expansion through contextualization and dialogue relating to one's overall web of ethical convictions.¹⁷⁰ Awareness of the interrelationship of conviction, value, and artistic perception and judgment, within the context of the unity of value, expands the field of considerations of conscious curatorial practice.

A democratic imagination of the aesthetic—the aesthetic as participatory process and cohesive gathering of experience as well as a form of public reason—carries other important implications within the artworld-academic complex. Rather than making aesthetics only about art or narratives and structures around artistic practice, the question of the aesthetic, within the context of the artworld, also becomes reframed. Aesthetics becomes centred on the meaning, value, and ordering of experience, its ethical-creative potential and realization (or lack thereof), through its constitutive processes and relations, worldviews and narratives, spaces and contexts. To transformatively re/imagine the aesthetic, to make its workings visible in such a manner that it can be engaged with transparency and accountability are thus important aspects of ethically re/oriented

are part and parcel of our enactive consciousness—this consciousness is not mechanical or deterministic but responsive and agential in a human way and within a broader ecological and cosmic order.

¹⁷⁰ Difference in information does not provide a sufficient account of difference in interpretation. I think that having access to different information or insights can certainly lead to changing, solidifying or questioning one's convictions. It is not, however, information per se that shifts one's interpretation but how information either relates to or affects a person's whole network of convictions that leads to a different conception of the value of art and one's role in advocating that value. Holding onto particular convictions also impacts what kind of information one may access or develop as well as how one personally and social weighs the validity and purpose of information encountered.

curatorial practice.¹⁷¹

Aesthetic sensibility, orientation, and evaluative criteria form powerful undercurrents in the artworld, arising from socialization into various norms, histories, and genres of art and academic criticism and practice. My aim is to open up aesthetic sensibilities, orientations, perceptions and discernments—to expand the space for understanding, including, and engaging aesthetic embodiments that may look, feel, and be very different because they arise from trajectories that extend beyond or outside those strongly sanctioned by profession, status, and discipline. What if someone’s sensibility is much more shaped by their love of the earth than by their love of art theory? What if how someone inhabits their creativity has very little to do with art historical legacy in the disciplinary sense? Do we have enough generosity of spirit to genuinely perceive and courageously engage with the aesthetics of others irrespective of differences in conviction and practice and with non-attachment to authority and sanction? Activation of such responsiveness may itself be viewed as the unleashing of the creative-ethical potential and power of the aesthetic, understood as a cohering, whole-making aspect of perception and relationship, emotion and reason,

¹⁷¹ Wolfgang Iser in “Aesthetics Beyond Aesthetics: For a New Form to the Discipline” in *UnDoing Aesthetics* makes a thoughtful case regarding how “artistically restricted aesthetics...is not even capable of being an aesthetics of art” (98). Iser underscores the importance of “polyaesthetic” perception (95)—that artworks can demand not only contemplation but also “historical perceptive dimensions....semantic and allegorical, societal, everyday or political dimensions—and of course, emotional and imaginative processes too” (94). My emphasis differs in that I think this polyaesthetic form of perception, as it is activated and institutionalized in the artworld, is still not open enough, socially and epistemically, processually and relationally. I posit an alternative conception of curation in order to give the question of curious and caring responsiveness more intricate attention—to look at the processes by which we can genuinely perceive beyond conditioned thinking.

process and action.¹⁷²

In this section, I argued for the aesthetic to be explored in relation to one's wider web of values and as a form of public reason and deep relationality. My aim has been to develop a framework of the aesthetic that supports challenging any direct or indirect appropriation of it in the service of coercive or presumptive curatorial relations and processes. I have also sought to renew the transformative possibilities of curatorial endeavours by restoring regard for the embodiment of value and meaning, purpose and growth in aesthetic experience.

3.3 An Ethical Conception of Culture

Culture is connected to the carrying of agency within any particular set of contexts, frameworks, and relations that constitute flow of experiences, interactions, and other crossings. As a together-doing or co-creative concept-practice, culture may be seen to carry ethical potentiality in that a sense of purpose, meaning, or direction is germane to its very understanding. Culture is hardly evoked, narrowly or expansively, to indicate rudderless, random, and arbitrary undertakings. The seed of purpose and vision that is constitutive of the very evocation of the concept of culture

¹⁷² In *The Ideology of the Aesthetic* (Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 1990) literary critic and theorist Terry Eagleton raises the question regarding how much or in what ways what we articulate about the aesthetic, about our inner life, our sensory as well as intellectual experience, reflects the contradictions, anxieties, desires, rationalizations, and imperatives of a capitalist social order. I concur that various contexts, realities, and worldviews certainly impact and shape aesthetic perception. At the same time, I carry immense respect for the power of ordinary discernment arising from wonder and curiosity, connection and humility. This may be viewed as faith in courage and commitment that constitutes personal responsibility and accountability. In short, an integrative, ethical concept-practice of the aesthetic, of the kind I develop in this section, certainly needs to take cognizance of and is capable of pragmatically and philosophically supporting the confrontation of material relations of exploitation and harm that degrade our own humanity and the humanity of others and the Earth, whether capitalist or arising from another mode of economic or social organization.

provides a transformative opening: to anchor culture as a positive, constructive, evolving process. I believe culture needs to convey a sense of seeing and inhabiting the world that enhances it, that deepens connection and responsiveness, versus standing in for some externalized, objectified differences in collectivities.

An ethical conception of culture/together-doing regards mutually honoring, fluid processes of learning and interacting. Learning and interaction, contingent and contextual in bases, can take place in a respectful and responsible manner in a myriad ways. Diversity / creativity of pathways to responsiveness is a useful way of articulating a non-relativist yet radically plural and open idea of culture versus narrow, reifying, generalizing, or racializing constructions of culture. Certainly in terms of human process, any ethical conception of culture needs to acknowledge the breadth of human capability to be good or to be harmful and contextualize these capabilities within a capacious understanding of human vulnerability. In other words, to see culture in the conscious directing of the capability for good is not restrictive or moralizing but spacious in possibility.

To further illustrate why a constitutively ethical orientation to an integrative concept-practice of culture is useful, consider the renowned Nigerian environmental activist Wangari Maathai's rich understanding of culture and its role in providing personal and collective rooting and direction:

Agriculture, systems of governance, heritage, and ecology are all dimensions and functions of culture....Whether written or oral, the political, historical, and spiritual heritage of a community forms its cultural record, passed from one generation to another....Culture gives a people self-identity and character. It allows them to be in harmony with their physical and spiritual environment, to form the basis for their sense of self-fulfillment and personal peace. It enhances their ability to guide themselves, make

their own decisions, and protect their interests. It's their reference point to the past and their antennae to the future.¹⁷³

In key ways, an ethical fabric is already there in Maathai's conception of culture if ethics is understood expansively, as involving ways we relate with each other, of what it means to have a rich and whole life, of the interrelationship of individual, collective, human, and ecological good. Culture as an accumulatively alive form of together-doing, historical, ancestral, and socio-ecological, provides a situational habitat to develop and expand our cognitive-social capacities.¹⁷⁴ It also assists in streamlining response-abilities, providing a field of orientations and maps. This grounding and orienting aspect of culture should not be seen as rendering culture as frozen or parochial. Culture is alive and moving—it is a sedimented yet improvisational form of together-doing, constituting embodied and participatory social navigation. One of the many reasons I appreciate Jack Forbes' recasting of culture as together-doing is that it turns a static, noun-based notion of culture that is easy to reify or hyperabstract into a relational action-based conception.

¹⁷³ Wangari Maathai, "Culture? The Missing Link," in *The Challenge for Africa* (New York: Pantheon Books, 2009): 161.

¹⁷⁴ For a thoughtful exploration of the role of habit or cognitive trails chartered in particular environments as key to developing skills and consciousness, see Alva Noë, "Habits," *Out of Our Heads*, 97-128. For example, Noë points out that language is a form of social practice, "not a matter of having memorized this or that or having internalized a complex symbolic system" (104). Noë more generally explains: "Without habit, there is no calculation, no speech, no thought, no recognition, no game playing. ... A habit is a trial laid down by our own repetitive action. A habit is not merely a disposition to act or an automatic or unthinking tendency; it is a responsiveness to the environment in which we find ourselves" (125). Where Noë's work intersects with my understanding of culture is that culture may be usefully understood as an embodied form of environmental responsiveness—it provides a situational context/habitat in which to develop and expand our cognitive-social capacities. This powerfully orienting aspect of culture is one of the many reasons why assault on the cultures people inhabit can be so devastating.

A fluid and agential conception of culture is strongly compatible with the ethical task of passionate and accountable together-doing in a perceptually and socially dynamic world. It addresses Maathai's key concern that culture can become "a double-edged sword that can be used as a weapon to strike a blow for empowerment or to threaten those who would assert their own self-expression or self-identity."¹⁷⁵ The conceptualization and deployment of culture in a manner that rationalizes oppression and stifles dissent¹⁷⁶ can be challenged through rethinking culture in the dynamic manner I have outlined—not only as accumulative and grounding in bases but also as constitutively improvisational, responsive, and mobile. The conception of culture as responsiveness amidst flux also captures that there are moment-to-moment opportunities for shaping, renewing, and transforming relationships or together-doings, providing important insight into the human process of social change, including structural and institutional change.

Structures and institutions function by way of human collaborators, co-creators that can contribute to the construction, development and upholding of these structures and institutions and can also work to dismantle, evolve or transform them. It is for this reason that Abdullahi An-Na'im, a Muslim legal scholar, expresses that "the self-determination of the human person is really the core and the hope" in efforts for dignity and justice.¹⁷⁷ In a related vein, artist, writer,

¹⁷⁵ Maathai, 164.

¹⁷⁶ Culture can of course also be deployed as a cover for less loaded reasons—for example, to do things in ways that are more about convenience or so that one is socially accepted within certain circles. By this example, I do not mean to discount that people are not socialized into norms of behaviour that need challenge—that they only deploy culture in bad faith. However, whether it is one's intentions and/or one's socialization that needs further scrutiny, making responsibility central to culture-making is meant to address such matters.

¹⁷⁷ See An-Na'im, Abdullahi. "Religion, Law, and the Politics of Human Rights: Talal Asad and Abdullahi An-Na'im in Conversation." Berkeley Center for Religion, Peace, and World Affairs, Georgetown University. 29 Sept. 2009. PDF file.

and activist Fabiola Nabil Naguib incisively points out, “consciously walking a mindful path and a path of peace is about living justly and with personal accountability. It is not the systemic structures of inequality or inhumanity that limit our access to a peaceful world but those of us participating in making those structures function and progress as if by way of an invisible force.”¹⁷⁸ Naguib’s focuses on the centrality of ongoing personal responsibility and accountability to mindfulness and justice—that such efforts are not about a place of transcendent arrival nor responsibility distancing notions of structures. Rather justice is an ongoing process of how to live one’s life in a way that carries personal and social integrity, deeply congruent with an ethically responsive conception of culture.

3.4 Transforming Curatorial Practice

In the beginning of this chapter, I indicated that shaping and supporting narratives of culture is a powerful capability of curatorial endeavours. My reconceptualization of culture and its ethical and integrative imagination are an attempt to provide philosophical support and social reasoning for furthering conscious, creative, and connected ways of relating, responding, and living. In carrying such intention and demonstration, my reconceptualization also furthers curation as an ethic of care, one that supports harmonious together-doing involving mutuality of individual and collective, human and non-human flourishing. In providing a challenge to dissociative modes of thought and practice with regard to culture, I exercise not only a sense of connection and care,

¹⁷⁸ Fabiola Nabil Naguib, “Living a Breathable Peace,” Unpublished Essay, 2012.

but also seek to provide strong public reason to value emotionally healthy, sensuously alive, and intellectually non-coercive and curious engagements with the world.

Apart from demonstrating a particular curatorial ethic, rethinking culture also lays further ground for expanding and democratizing the conception and practice of curation. If curation is regarded as engagement with creative practice, an integrative and ethical conception of culture strongly visibilizes creativity as part of all domains of activity, as responsiveness, as emergent in aesthetic, ethical, and social processes and relations. Further, an improvisational, responsive, and mobile conception of culture puts into purview the powerful role of creative flux in reality-sensing, imagining, and making. Such a conception of culture both recognizes and makes room for diverse ways of responding to creative flux, individually and collectively, ontically and epistemically. Closely interrelated to the notion of flux is the notion of transformative practice, of the intricacy and power of agency, in which futures (existentially, spiritually, socially) are plural, processual and immanent rather than carrying a pre-determined, objectifying, or totalizing sense of relationality to the world.¹⁷⁹

A cross-sector, dynamic conception of creativity and culture assists in envisioning curation at a societal scale—the role of individuals and communities, nature and cosmos in the

¹⁷⁹ Dipesh Chakrabarty in “Reason and the Critique of Historicism” in *Provincializing Europe* focuses on “how we may find a form of social thought that embraces analytical reason in the pursuit of social justice but does not allow it to erase the question of heterotemporality from the history of the modern subject” (239). He goes on to state, “futures that already ‘are’ do not necessarily look to the futures that ‘will be,’ which forms itself in the calculations and the desires of the subject of political modernity. The futures that ‘are’ are plural, do not lend themselves to being represented by a totalizing principle, and are not always amenable to the objectifying procedures of history writing (251).” See *Provincializing Europe: Postcolonial Thought and Historical Difference* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000): 237-55. The focus on transformation and creative flux may be viewed as my curatorial correlate to questioning historicism.

cultivation and sustenance of human and non-human creativity. Apart from the visibilization of the democratic, non-humancentric nature of curatorial processes, my connective re/orientation of curation also has significant implications for the profession of curation—for the need to carry deep humility and wonder. Do visions, narratives, structures and practices in the curatorial profession inhabit and further receptiveness and responsiveness, beyond the logic of the artworld-academia post/industrial complex? Is the philosophical, practical, and social basis of the profession of curation cognitively and socially assonant in relation to what one may have public reason to value as true, good, and/or beautiful?

The current curatorial field is certainly politically and socially engaged and yet necessitates increased efforts in the expansion of reflective reasoning. The purpose of this chapter and my thesis as a whole with regard to these efforts is to imagine and explore curation in a manner that is supportive of the democratic creative power and potential of each individual, of communities at large, and the Earth.¹⁸⁰ Without essentializing or denying differences or defining scientific, legal, economic or other spheres from a centric location or as atomized

¹⁸⁰ There is also a vital link between rethinking social structuring, the reimagining of culture and the encouragement of connection to humanity of self and others. Decolonizing and democratizing social contracts, policies, and structures are vital to societal transformation but these efforts gather valuable meaning, purpose, and legitimacy based on the cognitive and social expansiveness and inclusivity of public engagement that leads to their formalization. Ethical culture-making/together-doing and a deep sense of humanity are integral aspects of such expansive engagement, providing an important way of linking structure and individual, community and contract.

In a sense, connecting culture-making to social structuring is a restoration of the understanding that ethics and justice do not first arise from a social contract, but from creative, caring responsiveness—living, relating, communicating, and deliberating together. Social contracts and structures need to reflect, support, and deepen such responsiveness, in their bases as well as functioning. Deepening of creative responsiveness—awakening and alivining of heart, mind, and spirit, cognitive and social expansiveness, assonance, and inclusivity in public reason/ing—is what may be understood as an ethically re/membering and re/orienting of curatorial practice.

domains, rethinking of culture in this chapter opens up the public role of curation. Curation, whether as a form of inquiry related to art¹⁸¹ or other social domains, can be an expansive process of creative sustenance and ethical engagement that supports enrichment of vision, purpose, value, connection and relationship.

¹⁸¹ I think it is an important curatorial imperative to neither overinflate or underflate the social role of art, its open capability as a material practice to be healing or numbing, empowering or corrupt. Art is a form of participation in the world, interrelationally, psychically, materially – it is a way of co-materializing feelings, perceptions, explorations, and narratives of self and the world. It is an integral aspect of care to be curious why someone creates, and they certainly are and can be very diverse reasons for and ways of artistically participating. At the same time, based on interrelationship and connection of art to other arenas of one's life, it is also important to ask questions regarding authenticity, integrity, congruence, social purpose, and so on. To me, art and engagement with art is so much more of a shared together-doing question, about journeying, and accountably learning, challenging, assessing and growing together. This differs from the overemphasis on arthistorical legacy or the cultural-theoretical academic jargon that to me seems to evacuate fundamental questions that we need to ask ourselves and of others, not from a place of judgment but humane and responsive relationality.

Chapter 4: Archives Re/Imagined: Knowledge Regimes, Social Structuring, and Science



Figure 1 Fabiola Nabil Naguib, *Archives Re/Imagined* (No. 1 of 5 in Series I), 2005/07, Montreal/Cairo Installation Series, Large-scale Mixed Media Panels with Accompanying Text Panels.

In this chapter I will be exploring a fundamental aspect of curation—archiving. Why pluralize the epistemological imagination of archiving? How does the opening up of archiving further the ethical re/orienting of curatorial practice? I will address these questions by critiquing dominant understandings of archives and archival architecture as well as constructing expansive concept-practices of archiving.

The expansive and relational understandings of archiving I develop in this chapter emerge from my commitment to epistemic or cognitive justice. And my commitment to epistemic justice arises from my connection to the importance of non-coercion, curiosity, and “creative use

of difference, “¹⁸² not only in interpersonal dynamics, but in the nexus of knowledge and social structuring that co-constitutes archiving. As curatorial practice is involved in visibilizing, constructing, as well as supporting public archives (creative and scientific, personal and professional), my focus on socio-epistemic reciprocity in the context of archival imagination and practice seeks to extend the ethical reach and reason of curatorial practice along with deepening its public responsibility.

4.1 Introduction

The construction and bordering of archives form essential aspects of institutionalized curation and its professional authority under colonial modernity and postmodernity. Colonial modernity and postmodernity may be understood, in shorthand, as globally dominant processes of social organization.¹⁸³ My epistemological critique of archiving involves challenging

¹⁸² The phrase “creative use of difference” is borrowed from “The Creative Use of Difference,” *Conversations with Audre Lorde* 146-153. Lorde writes, “Now, what we must learn from each other is how we are *different*, and be able to stand up and look at those differences—without sentimentality and without insecurity. Because if we can recognize how we are different, and how we are the same, that is to say, the similarities of our goals and the differences of the particulars of our lives, we can add to each other [sic] different ways of battling.

And it is a way in which the creative use of difference will help us really move toward change, toward that future we can share” (153). I value Lorde’s idea that difference can be immensely creative if we challenge distortions of difference and fears of interdependency in the service of mutual growth.

¹⁸³ As individuals, rooted in various worldviews, contexts, affiliations, values and relations, negotiate, respond to, and shape modernity and postmodernity, plethoric histories and varieties of modernity/ies emerge. When employing the terms colonial modernity and postmodernity in this chapter, I am holding these critiques in mind while invoking them to refer to modes of social organization and structuring that are now globally dominant. Their global dominance is connected to the shaping of social relations and structures through historical and contemporary processes of European imperialism.

At the same time, my invocation of colonialism is broader, involving recognition of processes and trajectories of colonialism stemming from non-european histories of conquest, dominance, and oppression as well. There may be collusion between various Northern and Southern historical-colonial modes of

dominant notions of modernity and postmodernity in the service of visibilizing historico-structural heterogeneity, heterogeneity closely intertwined with epistemic and cognitive diversity, difference and divergence. Every sphere of social ordering from law to economics to culture, as constituted through the atomized structuring of modernity, relies upon an archival body of thought and practice to constitute, justify, and reproduce its claims and values. Archival matters thus form the lattice through which knowledge construction and social structuring intimately configure each other.

In cognitively and socially unjust conditions and/or contexts, the materializing of archiving is embedded in uneven politics of recognition, authority, legitimacy, and belonging. Within these dynamics, archiving, rather than being inclusive and respectful, becomes involved in defining for and over others what constitutes legitimate information, knowledge, research, creativity, history, and memory. Through this kind of socio-epistemic streaming and policing as well as others, the architecture of dominant power-knowledge nexuses is ordered. This ordering determines who and what is to be granted the privilege to have a place and space in social, political, cultural, and economic institutions and spheres. In other words, the materialization and perpetuation of dominant ideologies, practices, and worldviews are integrally woven within and/or supported by specific archivings of the world. In this chapter, I challenge dominant

governance, and even when there is tension and conflict, negotiated participation in now globalized structures of capitalist modern governmentality may be shared. I define modern governmentality as a web of dominant mindsets, practices, and institutions that shape, demarcate and police how communities and nations (and the very concept of the state) need to be socially organized in order to carry legitimacy and recognition since the colonial-modern era. My articulation here resonates with Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri's reflections on the emergence of a "new global form of sovereignty" called "Empire" whose "logics of rule in some sense originated in Europe and the United States [that] now invest practices of domination throughout the globe" (*Empire*, xii; xvi). It is this elaborated sense that I invoke through the phrase "colonial modernity and postmodernity."

understandings and activations of archiving and their attempted atomization, inferiorization or de-materialization of vital histories, philosophies, and technologies of self, community, and reality. I thus find it imperative to critically probe, expand, and pluralize concept-practices of archiving, thereby also further expanding the ethical reach of curatorial practice.

I connect not only with creativity but also with archiving as a planetary commons—as part of all life, not to be centrally claimed by a particular community or human beings solely. In this endeavour, I am deeply inspired by Fabiola Nabil Naguib’s profound re/imagining of archiving within interconnection and responsive ethics of self, community, and justice:

... archiving..[is] a living, breathing system of connection, whereby the earth and cosmos and all human and non-human inhabitants are inextricably linked to each other and by each other, for survival, to witness and record, for all generations to come. The activations of listening, witnessing, acknowledging, and sharing, as well as refusing to be subalternized or contained, are all active sites of archiving, fundamentally and inextricably linked to activating justice. Re/imaginings of archives and archiving in multiple ways are essential to ethical re/memberings of histories as dynamic records of existence, never to be suppressed and emerging as *all* of our histories were meant to.¹⁸⁴

In the coming chapters, I will explore re/memberings of archiving as relational and experiential, creative and agential, encompassing cognitive plurality and socio-cosmic depth.

¹⁸⁴ Naguib, *Uninhabiting the Violence of Silencing*, 11.

4.2 Introductory Remarks on the Nexus of Archiving and Science

The big bang of the Galilean revolution made the world of value safe for science. But the new republic of ideas became itself an empire. The modern philosophers inflated the methods of physics into totalitarian metaphysics. They invaded and occupied all the honorifics—reality, truth, fact, ground, meaning, knowledge, and being—and dictated the terms on which other bodies of thought may aspire to them. The question has become whether and how the world of science can be made safe for value.

—Ronald Dworkin¹⁸⁵

Curation in natural sciences and in fields related to the humanities, as well as how archives are utilized in the social sciences (a form of curation), still remain in significant solitude and even suspicion with regard to each other. The question of value, of ethical and moral responsibility¹⁸⁶, demands an integrative, connective approach to the imagination of archiving across disciplines and social spheres. I begin to demonstrate in this chapter that a connective approach is able to illuminate, challenge, and expand archival relations in transformative ways. Specifically, I contribute to the conscious opening onto an ecology of archival relations by challenging colonial-modern science's congealing of what is deemed empirical and technological as well as atomization of truth from the fabric of interrelationship. My archival critique and re/imagination is thus aligned with Dworkin's call to explore "whether and how science can be made safe for value." Science needs to be made safe for value for both

¹⁸⁵ *Justice for Hedgehogs*, 417.

¹⁸⁶ I appreciate Ronald Dworkin's helpful distinction between ethical and moral responsibility, with ethics centring on the responsibility to live a life of value and meaning (including the responsibility to independently figure out what one values and envisions as a purposeful path) and morality centring on the responsibility we carry towards others. I agree with Dworkin on the need for striving to authentically and coherently unify ethics and morality. See Dworkin, *Justice for Hedgehogs*.

reasons of epistemic and social justice. Critiquing science as well as opening up to epistemic plurality of sciences lays the ground for challenging of hegemonic concept-practices of media and technology in the coming chapters in the service of visibilizing holistic materiality and modes of archiving.

Archiving is more than public or private record as congealed in an artifact, art object, other media or form, or a particular body of data, practice, and so on. It is integrally connected to a societal knowledge regime, with the currently dominant modes of knowledge construction and attendant social structuring underwritten by the authority of science. As Gyan Prakash articulates, science operates as a “sign of modernity,”¹⁸⁷ “as the legitimating sign of rationality and progress,” not just “a body of methods, practices, and experimental knowledge.”¹⁸⁸ Knowledge construction via the prism of euro-colonially shaped science and its disembodied conceptions of empiricism and rationality deeply inform terms of archival imagination and materiality. As Prakash documents, constituting of colonies into a manageable unity in the minds of European colonizers was enabled by the “histories, surveys, studies, and censuses” constituting a “body of empirical knowledge,” which went “hand in hand with the establishment of a grid of modern infrastructures and economic linkages that drew the unified territory into the global capitalist economy.”¹⁸⁹ The appropriation of land and resources and the conquest of peoples was thus not only undertaken in the name of a particular religion or purported

¹⁸⁷ Gyan Prakash, *Another Reason: Science and the Imagination of Modern India* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1999): 13. Although Prakash’s focus is on India, he admits that the relationship of modern science, empire, and governmentality carries a generalizable claim as well, see especially p. 11-13.

¹⁸⁸ Ibid. , 7.

¹⁸⁹ Ibid. , 4.

civilizational superiority—euro-colonialism was also increasingly justified through a particular construct of science and rationality and involved application of these constructs to social structuring. Domineering construct-practices of science and rationality are still incredibly powerful today, pervading contemporary notions of seemingly neutral technology transfer and seemingly beneficial development. As Shiv Viswanathan asserts, “development which was meant to create justice and equality,” has turned into an assault on marginalized peoples through modern democracy’s social connivance between “science, development, and the nation.”¹⁹⁰ He further underscores how “the idea of technology transfer is one of the most quotidian ideas of governance regarding technology. It nestles peacefully in World Bank Reports, Population Council monographs and NGO reports. In an ordinary sense it captures the hegemony and violence of everyday life in a policy world.”¹⁹¹ It is not only the economics or the politics of technologies and scientific rationalities that need public scrutiny, it is also their epistemological bases that need questioning.

If epistemic justice is to be socially realized, reductive discourses of rationality¹⁹² and

¹⁹⁰ See Shiv Viswanathan, “An Invitation to a Science War,” *Cognitive Justice in a Global World: Prudent Knowledges for a Decent Life*, ed. Boaventura De Sousa Santos (New York: Lexington Books, 2007): 337.

¹⁹¹ Ibid. , 340.

¹⁹² There are of course many kinds of dominant conceptions of rationality. One particularly alienating version of rationality reduces rational thought and practice to the pursuit of narrow self-interest. Another version discounts the integral role of emotions in reason and ethics. As a critique, I agree with Audre Lorde that rationality is a “tool” or “bridge,” but by itself it does not provide a pathway to a meaningful life. She argues that the deepest parts of our selves from which we seek sustenance and guidance do not come out of rationality, though we may deploy rationality in the service of our deepest visions. See Lorde, “The Creative Use of Difference,” 147. I think Lorde’s position is closely aligned with Ronald Dworkin’s argument of the “independence of value” in *Justice for Hedgehogs*, of how value is rooted in conviction, not brute fact (9).

empiricism¹⁹³, and their attendant constructs of time, space, memory, truth, and history, infra-structured by science as a singular sign of modernity, need to be challenged and expanded i.e. the architecture of hegemonic archiving needs to be confronted. Within colonial-modern power-knowledge nexuses, many epistemologies are strategically and/or reductively rendered “ethnic,” “folk,” “spiritual,” “cultural,” “mythological,” thereby deemed inappropriate to depthfully shape public reason, discourses, and institutions. The containment of the border-crossing, infra-structural capabilities of subalternized knowledge regimes is enabled both by narratives of atomized culture and the role of colonial-modern science as a metaphysical archival arbitrator. These strands are mutually reinforcing, working in tandem to devalue and contain economic, creative, social, political, scientific and technological constructs and contributions of multiple ways of knowing and being, ways robust in criticality and complexity. In this chapter, I will begin to challenge normative histories and constructs of science and their authoring of concept-practices of media and technology, re/orienting them within an expansive archival ecology. I will continue furthering the envisioning of transformative curatorial practice by foregrounding archiving as (ethical) responsiveness in the context of interconnection. In my understanding and vision, human and non-human individuals and communities, the earth, and cosmos are archival resources as well as active archival agents, creatively and constantly weaving archival webs through socio-ecological together-doings at many scales.

¹⁹³ Dominant conceptions of empiricism include mechanistic notions of sensory observation and verification, information and knowledge attained through disembodied norms of reason, etc.

4.3 Co-Constitutions of Archiving, Science, and Modernity

Archiving in hegemonic realms remains yoked to a specific kind of materialization and visibility of data, voices, and personal or public social and cultural memories.¹⁹⁴ It is connected to colonial¹⁹⁵ dynamics of how socio-cultural moments, memories, and practices are solidified into or mediasized into Reality and History. Jacques Derrida describes the archival process as one of commencement and commandment—“*there* where things *commence*—...[an] ontological principle – but also the principle according to the law, *there* where men and gods *command*, *there* where authority, social order are exercised, *in this place* from which *order* is given....”¹⁹⁶ I

¹⁹⁴ Vision-practices of interconnectivity and relationality that I develop throughout my thesis challenge narrow divisions of private and public. Interconnectivity in an ethical sense is concerned with accountability in relationships. It involves inhabitation of responsibilities for the impact of one’s thought, behaviour, and action as one is always connected to others in multiple ways. Although differentiation and division of responsibilities makes sense based on context, dichotomous and rigid conceptions of the private and public can atomize what counts as meaningful participation and impact in the world.

¹⁹⁵ By colonial, I mean to imply a whole set of coercive dynamics, of domination, homogenization, instrumentality, etc., that stem from disconnection, disconnection from self, from kin, from humanity, from compassion and love. I have learned immensely about colonialism as a symptom of lack of connection from Fabiola Nabil Naguib.

I do not associate colonialism only with European conquest and domination, although the disconnection that lead to and continues to deepen because of that history and legacy is important to acknowledge and analyze.

¹⁹⁶ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression*, trans. Eric Prenowitz (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1996): 1. I find Derrida’s critique resonant in the sense that archiving benefits from being scrutinized with regard to its connection to social position, relations, and contests. However, I do not share in his orientation that archiving is inevitably or largely about power in the sense of coercive authority to create order and authorize places from where order is to be exercised. In my viewpoint, there are also deeply meaningful and ethical ways of conceiving of power as well as archiving. In relation to philosophers like Derrida and Foucault, their hypercriticality of dominant power, their almost exclusive focus on power-over, ends up supplanting positive and practical connections to human freedom. I am not alone in the understanding that these philosophers create too flat a picture of the world.

have also come to understand archives within colonial as well as postcolonial dominant-modern imaginings as ontological and epistemological places and spaces for the production and reproduction of social subjects, hierarchies, and authority.¹⁹⁷ Significantly, archiving and science are intimately connected and their co-constitutive role in modernity has historical and professional connections. Scholars like Elizabeth Yale have demonstrated that “material culture of scientific communication” and “modern historical consciousness”¹⁹⁸ worked together to forge the mental, physical, and social elements of what is normatively viewed as archiving today. Knowledge and memory traced on a printed page or preserved in another form in an institutional site (library, museum, etc.) came to carry increasing socio-cultural authority and capital as well as the privilege of being reckoned as properly historical. For example, “inspired by the philosopher Francis Bacon¹⁹⁹, naturalists viewed their papers not as the byproduct of producing printed knowledge, but as the fundamental stuff of knowledge, repositories of facts and

Edward Said has pointedly characterized Foucault and Derrida as scribes of power from a negative position. Philosopher Charles Taylor views them as discounting “horizons of significance” we cannot and should not do without. See Charles Taylor, *Malaise of Modernity* (Concord: House of Anansi Press 1991), especially p. 66-69 and Said’s comments in *Power, Place, and Culture: Interviews with Edward Said*, ed. Gauri Viswanathan (New York: Vintage Books, 2002).

¹⁹⁷ For an exploration of archiving in its professional and practical aspects as well as how these aspects connect to ontological politics, see Louise Craven, ed., *What are Archives? Cultural and Theoretical Perspectives: A Reader* (Cornwall: Ashgate Publishing, 2008). Also see

¹⁹⁸ Elizabeth Yale, “With Slips and Scraps: How Early Modern Naturalists Invented the Archives,” *Book History* 12 (2009): 3.

¹⁹⁹ Francis Bacon was a key English philosopher and shaper of colonial-modern science, its methodology, and public role. Although Yale is excavating British history of archives, the structuring of archives through scientific mindsets came to share ever broader geography. For a thorough critique of Bacon’s legacy, see Vandana Shiva, “Science, Nature and Gender,” in *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* (London: Zed Books, 1994): 14-37. Also see Adorno and Horkheimer, “The Concept of Enlightenment,” in *Dialectic of Enlightenment* (London: Verso, 1997): 3-42.

observations for future generations of naturalists.”²⁰⁰ The growing hold of this archival view is demonstrated by “seventeenth- and eighteenth-century projects to print the correspondence and unprinted works of such luminaries as Galileo, Robert Boyle, Isaac Newton, Jeremiah Horrocks, Rene’ Descartes, and Robert Hooke” and the creation of “new institutions—most prominently, the libraries of the Ashmolean Museum and the Royal Society—to protect and preserve...books and papers.”²⁰¹ Thus “the mental and cultural structure”²⁰² accompanying the physical structure of archives (collections of papers and objects in rooms or buildings with someone taking care of them, a curator or archivist) helps create norms of documentation, historicity, and materiality. Materials that are hegemonically archived are transformed into a source of knowledge or historical information. At the same time, materiality (what is viewed as real, solid or truthful), knowledge, and archiving, physically and mentally influenced by the ascendance of the reductionism and atomism of colonial-modern science, become objectified and

²⁰⁰ Yale, 3.

²⁰¹ Ibid. Now technological transformations—for example the rise of the printing press—are a crucial part of the story. The fact that science and technology correlate deeply, historically as well as in the present is well acknowledged. For an incredibly influential argument of their ordering together see Steven Shapin and Simon Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1985). What I am attending to is that the very conception of archiving and hegemonic histories and practices of science and technology are entangled in ways that are still rarely illuminated or challenged in a sustained manner. The last half of my dissertation is both a delineation of this entanglement and a constructive re/imagining.

Yale documents how the push for archival preservation emerged as “Seventeenth-century English natural historians and antiquaries lived in a world that did not much care for manuscripts. Writing a thought down and expecting it to be preserved was something of a desperate act: the possibility of loss or destruction was always present, and anything other than accidental preservation (the child of neglect) required vast resources of social, financial, and institutional capital” (1). Yale also details how “manuscripts were everywhere, yet they were being cut up, torn to pieces, and worn out by use until soon they could be found nowhere. The matter of manuscript—parchment and paper—was much more useful to most people than any text that might be written on it” (2).

²⁰² Ibid. , 22.

depersonalized.²⁰³ Yale's historical excavation reveals insights into the dominant concept-form of archiving—how it privileges, fetishizes, and reifies specific forms (manuscripts, certain kinds of objects, media, and so on) versus locating archiving within a transformative, living process of knowing and sharing. This eurocentric, elite, gendered, and class specific notion of archiving and archival materialization has become increasingly accepted as universal through globalization of colonial modernity. Here I am not referring to institutions like libraries or the production of books and preserving of records per se as eurocentric—these institutions and practices have a far longer historical and far wider geographical provenance. I am rather bringing attention to the ontology of knowledge, materiality and reality as forged by the archival architecture of dominant science, modernity, and empire that now have a global reach. Within such a historical trajectory, archiving as primarily involving the use of various media and technology (paper, print, film, video, internet, etc.) and preservation of information, records, memory and culture requires a broad, connective canvas of ethical and social assessment. An objectified construction of media and preservation can cognitively and socially fragment understanding and inhabitation of

²⁰³ Charles Taylor in *The Malaise of Modernity* argues that one way to counter “atomism and instrumentalism,” “institutionally and ideologically” well supported in modernity, is to recover “some of the richer moral background from which the modern stress on instrumental reason took its rise” (103). In brief, Taylor highlights that disengaged reason, unrealistic in relation to human lives as it is, in part came out of the moral desire to be “self-responsible and self-controlling” (103). Secondly, the power of science to assist instrumentally in improving living conditions, fighting disease, etc., has a crucial moral component (104). Taylor concludes that “if we come to understand why technology is important in the first place [morally], then it will of itself be limited and enframed by an ethic of caring” (106). I think this is one viable way of arguing and pursuing that instrumentality needs to be strongly bracketed within ethical and moral understanding and engagement – the question of value. Another way of articulating the same idea is that practicality has been separated from ethics and morality, and benefits from being restored as action that has integral relationship to social conviction and responsibility.

knowledge, history, memory and creativity as a complex living commons, backgrounding archiving as an experiential, interactive process of individual and collective re/membering.

Critics like Michael Moss have argued that ontological critiques create confusion as the professional archivist's focus is on the "function and activity of preserving the 'Documents in the Case,'" not the "ontological status of the 'documents' themselves."²⁰⁴ Moss distinguishes "form, format, medium and technologies" from "context, authority, and purpose...[which] are ontological characteristics."²⁰⁵ However, consciously recognizing and making the connection between form and content, technology and ontology, does not take away from crucial responsibilities of the professional archivist. These responsibilities incorporate what Moss terms the "fiduciary" function, in which "[t]he transmission of documents and records to secure storage where access is supervised protects the authors from future misrepresentation as well as allowing them to be held to account."²⁰⁶ Being holistically cognizant of socio-epistemic bases of technical and administrative decisions in archiving deepens the archivist's ability to be practically, socially, emotionally and intellectually perceptive and responsible with regard to trusteeship. The fiduciary role of the archivist is an interpretative endeavour and a process involving power-full decision-making. As archivists Joan Schwartz and Terry Cook emphasize, "in the design of record-keeping systems, in the appraisal and selection of a tiny fragment of all possible records to enter the archive, in approaches to subsequent and ever-changing description and preservation of the archive, and in its patterns of communication and use, archivists continually reshape,

²⁰⁴ See Michael Moss, "Opening Pandora's Box: What is an Archive in the Digital Environment?," Craven 83.

²⁰⁵ Ibid. , 76.

²⁰⁶ Ibid. , 80.

reinterpret, and reinvent the archive.”²⁰⁷ Further, integrity and trusteeship of memories, histories, and narratives are a dialogic, together-doing process and intersect with individual and collective aspirations and efforts inside and outside of the archival profession, thereby benefiting from a democratic, connective outlook.²⁰⁸

An ontic and epistemic critique of archiving allows for clarifying hegemonic modern historical consciousness. As historian Dipesh Chakrabarty critically reflects, “historical evidence (the archive) is produced by our capacity to see something that is contemporaneous with us—ranging from practices, humans, institutions, and stone inscriptions to documents—as relics of another time and place.”²⁰⁹ Put another way, historicism, which I see as rooted in perceptions of time and space shaped by science as the sign of the modern and rational, is a way of “converting lived relationships into relics of other times,” of viewing the “past as gone, and reified into an object of investigation.”²¹⁰ A consequence of such an ontology of history is the sidelining of plural ways of relating to constituting history, an erasure of the “heterotemporality”²¹¹ of the

²⁰⁷ See Joan M. Schwartz and Terry Cook, “Archives, Records, and Power: The Making of Modern Identity,” *Archival Science* 2.1-2 (2002): 1.

²⁰⁸ For thoughtful reflections on the intersections of professional archiving, democracy, and accountability, see Livia Iacovino, “Archives as Arsenals of Accountability,” *Currents of Archiving Thinking*, eds. Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil (Santa Barbara: Library Unlimited, 2010): 181-212. From a citizenship point of view, the recently passed Right to Information Act in India is a powerful example of the intersections of public accountability and democratic access to information and records. From a self-determining outlook, Naguib powerfully articulates in “A Copt’s Re/membering” that “no colonial or dominant anthropologists, theorists, historians, or the nations of the past and present can write us out of our continental and cultural remembrance, unless we relinquish our stories, our memories, our ancestors, and our accountability” (42). See Naguib, “A Copt’s Re/membering,” *Uninhabiting the Violence of Silencing*, 38-42.

²⁰⁹ Dipesh Chakrabarty, *Provincializing Europe*, 238.

²¹⁰ *Ibid.*, 243.

²¹¹ *Ibid.*, 239.

now—of archiving as a consciously experiential process, where the past, present, and future are entangled and mobile.

The objectification and linearity of time are underwritten by the social capital of hegemonic science. As Shiv Viswanathan succinctly encapsulates, “while science deals with a diversity of times from mechanical, historical, evolutionary, and quantum times (nanosecond), its own narratives are constructed in the impoverished time of unilinear narratives.”²¹² In the same way historicism translates plural ways of relating and inhabiting the continuum, multiplicity, and non-linearity of space and time into an objectified past through the discourse of anachronism, (colonial-modern) science “museumizes other forms of knowledge in the name of progress.”²¹³ Science as shaper of constructs integral to historical imagination and sanctioned ways of approaching history further weaves itself into the social and archival architecture of modernity.

²¹² Viswanathan, 345.

²¹³ Ibid. All quotes from Viswanathan below are from p. 345. He incisively points out that “a democracy based on standard factory time is literally an oxymoron.” In order for there to be substantive democracy, “a multiplicity of times” need to be honored in the knowledge construction and sociopolitical structuring that shape democracy. As an example, Viswanathan mentions how “a tribal performing shifting cultivation operates in a world of over twenty different kinds of time which emanates from the way he deals with soil, seed, seasons, rituals, fast, feast, rest, work, domestic and communal space.”

I believe democracy needs to be re/imagined not as something brought by settlers and colonizers but as an honorable and honoring way of walking with each other and the Earth. Through this re/imagination democracy and non-hegemonic worldviews may meet—it is crucial to understand participatory and just governance, longstanding, in multiple traditions and individual striving rather than unreflecting imposing colonizing forms of democracy or restricting narratives of democracy to its colonial-modern trajectory in the nation-state. For example, June McCue, Ned’u’ten scholar, has very incisively raised this issue for Indigenous peoples in relation to the colonial regime of Canada. She argues the necessity to honor visions and practices that do not “intend to integrate into Canada’s hegemony of institutions, governance, and state” (182) but seek to connect self-determination to “non-western forms of autonomy” and governance (183). See Lorna June McCue, “Treaty-Making from an Indigenous Perspective: A Ned’u’ten-Canadian Treaty Model,” Diss. University of British Columbia, 1998.

Before furthering my ontological and epistemological critique of archiving via its relationship to science, I would like to point out that euro-elite narratives of technological and scientific development are strongly implicated in the abstractive and extractive colonial ownership of creativity, knowledges, histories, memories, and practices. These narratives give so-called Westerners enormous agency, presence, and intellectual-philosophical-material credit for what was a profoundly global endeavor. They enable appropriation of the labor, authorship, agency, and knowledges of socio-culturally diverse communities, within and outside of Europe, in the formation of modernities and the development of what is narrowly coded as Western culture and thought. To illustrate my example, take Greek mathematics and science, often claimed as exclusively and centrally western but in actuality “not only fortuitously preserved but also developed in Islamic culture, to be claimed by the sciences of the European Renaissance.”²¹⁴ These narratives of imperial discovery—as if the world came into being only when Europeans witnessed, observed, and verified it—continue into the present. Ethno-mathematician Ron

²¹⁴ Sandra Harding in “Is Science Multicultural? Challenges, Resources, Opportunities, Uncertainties,” *Configurations* 2.2 (1994): 305-6. Harding gives several examples of the extensive borrowing from non-western cultures by modern science:

...the principles of pre-Columbian agriculture, which provided potatoes for almost every European ecological niche and thereby had a powerful effect on the nutrition and subsequent history of Europe, were subsumed into European science. Mathematical achievements from India and Arabic cultures provide other examples. The magnetic needle, the rudder, gunpowder, and many other technologies useful to Europeans and the advance of their sciences (were these not part of scientific instrumentation?) were borrowed from China. Knowledge of local geographies, geologies, animals, plants, classification schemes, medicines, pharmacologies, agriculture, navigational techniques, and local cultures that formed significant parts of European sciences' picture of nature were provided in part by the knowledge traditions of non-Europeans (306).

Eglash has documented the long-standing understanding and use of fractals²¹⁵ for practical, spiritual, and political purposes across many contexts in Africa for thousands of years.²¹⁶ In contrast, fractals were discovered in “modern” mathematics only in the 1970s!²¹⁷

An awareness of historical and social distortions caused by eurocentricity in the dominant narrations of science is strengthened via questioning and/or opening up constructs of science.²¹⁸

²¹⁵ Fractals refer to shapes/orders that are self-similar across scale, and are found in the natural world—ranging from clouds and ferns to river networks and capillaries in lungs.

²¹⁶ See Ron Eglash, “African Fractals.” *Ted Talks*. Ted, 29 Nov. 2007. Web. 13 Sept. 2010.

²¹⁷ I understand how the formulation of fractals within modern mathematical interpretative communities is a specific kind of achievement. At the same time, the longstanding careful observation and verification of fractal patterns in nature in many African societies and the rise of practical and social applications based on this understanding of fractals is a profound and related, not just different, scientific and technological achievement and should be recognized as such. For example, fractals could have been understood and utilized in dominant science and mathematics centuries sooner if there had been recognition of and dialogue with diverse scientific traditions, rooted in community, not just the lab.

Physicists David Bohm and F. David Peat in *Science, Order, and Creativity* show how quantum theory could have been advanced a century earlier if scientists had pursued different ideas with “sufficient energy and courage” versus burying them under “the weight of the whole tacit infrastructure of familiar and comfortable ideas” (39). Specifically, Bohm and Peat point out how the Newtonian idea of motion as based on paths that particles take and Hamilton-Jacobi theory based on understanding motion as waves could have been brought together by the simple yet profound creative perception that “ ‘a particle *is* a wave’ ” (41). Bohm argues for creativity and plurality in thinking, theorizing, and dialoguing on an ongoing basis in science versus coercive and defensive paradigmatic thinking. The pursuit of creativity and plurality in dominant science deeply benefits from open and respectful engagement with different traditions and communities of science.

²¹⁸ In part, the rise of science studies is reflective of a shift towards greater criticality towards concept-practices of science and technology. Two contentious but leading figures in the field are Bruno Latour and Donna Haraway, and for a good sense of their positions see their interviews and essays in *Chasing Technoscience: Matrix for Materiality*, eds. Don Ihde and Evan Selinger (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 2003). Both Latour and Haraway track the entanglements and assemblages of technoscience within everyday objects and practices. Haraway focuses on “co-evolution, co-habitation, Whiteheadian concrescence, and embodied cross-species sociality,” with “cyborgs and companion species each bring[ing] together the human and the non-human, the organic and the technological, carbon and silicon, freedom and structure, history and myth, the rich and the poor, the state and the subject, diversity

How nation-states, their economies, social structures and political systems are expected to be organized, built, function, and measure up are haunted by modern governmentality inscribed by universalized euro-logic, underwritten by the social authority and critical immunity of science. Vandana Shiva powerfully argues in *Staying Alive: Women, Ecology and Development* that “the relationship between reductionism, violence and profits is built into the genesis of masculinist science, for its reductionist nature is an epistemic response to an economic organization based on uncontrolled exploitation of nature for maximization of profits and capital accumulation.”²¹⁹ Shiva underscores how reductionist science’s “cognitive weakness” in “responding to problems posed by nature”²²⁰ continues to be made invisible because of the might of state and capital aided by “*projected* [my emphasis] objectivism, neutrality, and progress.”²²¹ Rather than allowing hegemonic science to be a metaphysical arbiter of reality, it is important to view it as one

and depletion, modernity and postmodernity, and nature and culture in unexpected ways” (60). Haraway argues that her “point is to engage ‘ontological choreography’ in the yearning for more liveable and lively relationships across kinds, human and non-human” (79). Bruno Latour’s work focuses on “how science and technology were [and are] providing some of the ingredients necessary to account for the very making and the very stability of society.” Latour argues that “this was the only way to give the word ‘construction’ some of its original meaning, to highlight the collective process that ends up as solid constructs through the mobilization of heterogenous crafts, ingredients, and coordination” (30). He also positions the non-human, including objects, as carrying strong agency and positions scientists as “being concerned with how the world is built,” as forging metaphysics, which he views as a “very concrete practice” and a “mixture of ethnomethodology and ontology” (18). I appreciate some of the rich insights Latour and Haraway offer and connect with their desire to build a good common world that honors relationality, plurality, and simultaneity. However, I still find their work disquieting. Latour and Haraway profess strong kinship with ethics and pragmatic living and making but the exploration of conscious and grounded responsibilities in all of one’s together-doings is hyperabstracted and dispersed in their work.

²¹⁹ Shiva, *Staying Alive*, 23.

²²⁰ Shiva, *Staying Alive*, 25.

²²¹ Ibid. , 21. Shiva also points how the witch-hunts of Europe took place at the same time as the rise of Baconian science and were “a process of delegitimising and destroying the expertise of European women” (21).

particular tradition of thought that needs to be held to greater account for the value implications of its modes of knowledge formation, including human and ecological costs of reductionism, claims of epistemic exclusivity, etc.²²²

Archiving science and technology beyond eurocentric or colonial-modern ideology creates opportunities for honoring geographically, historically, and epistemically diverse knowledges of natural and social worlds.²²³ As Nuu-chah-nulth scholar Umeek/E. Richard Atleo underscores the “Americas were pristine prior to contact less due to nature, as might be assumed by new comers, and more due to sound and deliberate management,”²²⁴ rooted in complex governance mechanisms and correlative scientific and technological practices.²²⁵ The narrative

²²² Even for critics like Jerome Kagan, who do not hold the same epistemological or ontological critique of dominant science and technology as Shiva, it is evident that natural sciences and the applications of their research in the last 200 years cannot be seen to have unequivocally improved human or non-human life, except when contextualized in very specific ways for a highly privileged segment of the world population. See Jerome Kagan, *The Three Cultures: Natural Sciences, Social Sciences, and the Humanities in the 21st Century* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 2009): 267-275.

²²³ Re/contextualizing the industrial revolution, so central to colonialism and capitalism, as intimately connected to destruction of numerous scientific traditions and technologies rooted in communities versus a unilinear narrative of progress, is also helpful here. In *Earth Democracy: Justice, Sustainability, and Peace* (Cambridge: South End Press, 2005) Shiva mentions the British colonial destruction of the Indian textile industry, which along with China, manufactured 73% of the world’s textiles in the mid 1700s (28). The British imposition of tariffs and prohibitions on the production of textiles in India is what allowed the textile industry in Manchester and other British cities to succeed, while India’s cloth making capacities and technologies were destroyed and it was forced to become an importer of millions upon millions of yards of cloth from Britain by the 1850s (29). Shiva thus concludes that the reason behind the success of British industry was unjust and coercive colonial policy that de-industrialized huge sectors in India—it was on the back of this destruction that British colonial-industrial technologies “progressed” (29).

²²⁴ Umeek/E. Richard Atleo, *Tsawalk: A Nuu-Chah-Nulth Worldview* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2004): 127. Umeek, grounding Nuu-chah-nulth epistemologies in the principle of *heshook-ish-tsawalk* (everything is one) provides concrete questions and avenues for interfacing hegemonic science and Nuu-chah-nulth science.

²²⁵ Jack Forbes makes similar points to Umeek in “Nature and Culture.”

of euro-colonially instigated modernity as the main progenitor of science and technology has an ideological component—the projection of a superior epistemic self-image through selective historicization and cognitive injustice. This colonial-modern, now global, narrativization severely undermines recognition, respect, and creative dialogue and growth across plural epistemic histories and practices.

In this chapter, I clarified and developed the relationship of archiving to knowledge and social structuring to make the case that science is as integral to curatorial domains as culture. Science and archiving are powerful epistemological constructs. My enframing of the interrelational dynamic of science and archiving within epistemic justice and an ethic of responsiveness and care enrich curatorial public responsibility. The interdisciplinary, creative and flexible positioning of curators and their presence in diverse sites—science and fine art museums, libraries and labs—provides them meaningful opportunities to collaborate and envision across fact/value and nature/culture dichotomies. Curators can help instigate public dialogue and understanding of creativity and archiving that is holistic and cohesive, broad and ethical, countering fragmentation of imagination and relationships. How a particular institution or a curator from a specific location or worldview may practically take on the implications of my rethinking of archiving can be highly contextual. At the same time, the kind of interconnectional understanding of archiving I develop carries potential to challenge, affirm, and transform curatorial motivations and practices through shifting perceptions and convictions around key grounds of thought.

Chapter 5: Interrelationship and Value in Archiving: Sciences and Erotic

Morality

In the previous chapter, I focused on delineating as well as re/orienting the relationship of science to archiving. I critically and creatively addressed norms of historicity and materiality, and begun mapping a connective vision of archiving. In this chapter, I further clarify and develop my connective vision of archiving utilizing art/literature based examples and exploring pluralities of science. These explorations relating to arts and sciences are deliberate, with an aim to instigate reflection on how empiricism can be expansively imagined and inhabited. I seek to bridge the science and art divide, to consider them together within cohesive forms of archiving/world-making. This effort is a response to rigid dichotomizing of subjectivity and objectivity, reality and imagination. It is a constructive exploration that seeks to illuminate interrelationship and value in archiving.

By interrelationship I mean meaningful connection between modes and forms of archiving, scientific and artistic, psychic and physical, including key constructs utilized to understand and shape knowledges. By value, I mean archiving is also an ethical and moral endeavour. How we conceive of archiving, how we archive the world, and the kind of archival relations and practices we give significance to and undertake are connected to values we hold.

5.1 Science, Archiving, and Value

...what the universe of physics leaves out is the very thing that makes the universe possible for us, or that makes it possible for us to construct that universe from our “sensory stimulations”—the intentional, valuational, referential work of “synthesis.” I claim, in short, that without *values* we would not have a *world*.

—Hilary Putnam²²⁶

The discourse and practice of science are incredibly crucial to engage as curator-citizens. So much of our world is brought to consciousness vis-à-vis the authority and vision of science, both as a discipline and as a lens of modernity. To engage with science as curators, as human beings and citizens, expands possibilities for democratic participation in how natural and social realities are defined and shaped—archived. In considering culture and science together, ethics, knowledges, and realities can be more connectively understood and responsively engaged.

My critical engagement with science is in the service of re/membering archiving as experiential and agential. Specifically, grounding science within human experience and consciousness visibilizes that there is no value-neutral epistemology. The interrelationship of epistemology and living clarifies how knowledge is an embodied and situated form of agency and practice. This interrelationship may be articulated in one light as “the intentional, valuational, referential work of ‘synthesis’”²²⁷ and in another as the orchestration of knowledge via ongoing, co-collaboration of mind, body, and world. Whether it is the idea and pursuit of empiricism and

²²⁶ Hilary Putnam, “Beyond the Fact/Value Dichotomy,” *Crítica: Revista Hispanoamericana de Filosofía* 14.41 (1982): 11.

²²⁷ Ibid.

objectivity, or the development and application of media and technology, these conceptual, practical, and social bases of archiving are thus better understood as forms of ethico-worldly participation, rooted in body, self and community.

The constructs of science, art, and philosophy, for instance, are examples of archival divisions. To open up these constructs is part of transformative archival practice. Although these distinctions in constructs may serve multiple purposes and/or contextual applications, their *dichotomization* can hinder the ability to perceive and pursue knowledges as ethical and integrative. To archive expansively and interrelationally in terms of concept-practices of science, philosophy, art, and so on, is a way of considering facts and values conjointly and advancing epistemic justice. Epistemic justice is important as idea-practices of what constitute science, art, law, and religion, for instance, can be centric, exclusionary, or domineeringly universal.²²⁸ By re/membering archiving as a relational and valuational process and practice, a priori bases of world-making via conceptualizations and categorizations can be challenged and instead radically open and deeply creative dialogue and understanding can be supported.

Sociologist Immanuel Wallerstein connects the emergence of academic disciplinary and division of knowledge into natural sciences, social sciences, and the humanities to the separation

²²⁸ An example of a scholar who richly and deeply engages with law in terms of epistemic and ontic diversity as well as relations of mutuality and reciprocity is John Borrows (Kegeedonce). See *Drawing Out Law: A Spirit's Guide* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010) and *Canada's Indigenous Constitution* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2010). In terms of exposing the ethnocentricity and inadequacy of the construct of religion, the recent work of Arvind Pal-Singh Mandair on Sikhism and the comparative philosophical work of Bimal Krishna Matilal are instructive. See Mandair, *Religion and the Spectre of the West: Sikhism, India, Postcoloniality and the Politics of Translation* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2009) and Matilal, *Logical and Ethical Issues: An Essay on the Indian Philosophy of Religion* (New Delhi: Chronicle Books, 2004).

of the pursuit of truth from what is considered good under the rising authority of science in the eighteenth century.²²⁹ He notes, “empirical science did not feel it had the tools to discern what was good; only what was true;” it further believed “that it had the monopoly on the search for the true.”²³⁰ Piet Hut, a theoretical astrophysicist, reflecting on grounds of dialogue between science and other knowledges, notes that a scientific sense of superiority or all-encompassing march towards truth is still quite palpable among both scientists and laypersons.²³¹ Hut sharply contends that in so far as scientific outlooks assert their separation from “human life, meaning, dignity, responsibilities, and other aspects of what it means to be human,” they cannot claim to carry a comprehensive grasp of the world.²³² He pointedly notes that “to exclude whole areas of human life, and especially the most important ones, from scientific analysis and then to use the self-

²²⁹ Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Structures of Knowledge or How Many Ways May We Know?” *Papers of the Fernand Braudel Center, 1996*. Binghamton University, n.d. Web. Accessed 30 Jan. 2013.

²³⁰ Immanuel Wallerstein, “The Structures of Knowledge or How Many Ways May We Know?” *Cognitive Justice in a Global World*, ed. Boaventura De Sousa Santos (New York: Lexington Books, 2007): 131. Wallerstein sees great potential in the increasing social scientization of the humanities as well as the natural sciences. I hold a more cautious stance than Wallerstein on the matter of social scientization. I think that social scientization can be highly problematic if key grounds of thought are not subject to ontological critique – history, archive, etc.

In terms of the natural sciences, Wallerstein focuses on the shifts being ushered in by complexity studies. Complexity studies, according to Wallerstein, may be seen to carry “two basic slogans: not temporal symmetry but the arrow of time; not simplicity as the ultimate product of science, but rather the explanation of complexity”(132). In my view, this is not sufficient enough transformation of knowledge. It is crucial that complexity studies also acknowledges and values the lived experience of space-time as multiple and heterogenous, as transformative, individually and communally. Otherwise, irrespective of greater understanding of the self-generative and complex nature of matter and the universe, cognitive-social diversity of knowing and being would not be able to be respectfully and seriously engaged within scientific thinking and practice.

²³¹ Piet Hut, “Conclusion: Life as a Laboratory,” *Buddhism and Science*, ed. B. Alan Wallace (Columbia University Press, 2003): 412.

²³² *Ibid.* , 410

assigned nonscientific character of those areas as a reason to not take them seriously is nothing but a logical fallacy.”²³³ In my view, such an exclusionary outlook is not only incomplete and illogical, it also short-circuits democratic and ethical responsibility. The idea of value-neutral scientific truth, underwritten by a logical fallacy and tautological definition of the concept-practice of science (science is what scientists do)²³⁴, separates knowledge from experience and

²³³ Hut, 411.

²³⁴ When I share my reflections on sciences, how they can also encompass practices and communities outside of the lab or academic disciplinary training, one particular response is that in expanding science or scientific outlook, one is turning sciences into something they are not. The issue at hand is who defines science and how, and what role community and value, social process and public reason play in the definitions and activities of sciences. I agree with Ursula Franklin that gate-keeping in science when it comes to the participation of citizens and what is considered relevant in knowledge-making needs to change for the sake of both democracy and justice. See especially “Reflections on Science and the Citizen,” *Ursula Franklin Reader*, 315-317.

Even within the philosophy of (dominant) science, the problem with delimitation—what is and is not science and how it may differ from other forms of investigation and analysis—is widely acknowledged. There are such a vast array of methods that even within mainstreamed science “philosophers of science now talk openly about the ‘demise’ of attempts to demarcate or define science by reference to a single set of methods” (Meyer 401). As Stephen Meyer encapsulates it:

Some sciences perform laboratory experiments. Some do not. Some sciences name, classify, and organize natural objects; some sciences seek to discover natural laws; others seek to reconstruct past events. Some sciences seek to formulate casual explanations of natural phenomena. Some sciences construct models. Some explain general or repeatable phenomena by reference to natural laws or general theories. Some study unique or particular events and seek to explain them by reference to past (casual) events.

Some sciences test their theories by making predictions; some test their theories by assessing their explanatory power; some test their theories by assessing both explanatory power and predictive power. Some methods of scientific investigation involve direct verification; some employ more indirect methods of testing. Some test theories by comparing the predictive or explanatory success of competing hypotheses. Some branches of science make inferences about entities that cannot be observed. Some sciences reason deductively; some inductively; some abductively. Some use all three modes of inference. Some sciences use the hypothetico-deductive method of testing. Some use the method of multiple competing hypotheses (401).

belief, interconnectivity and accountability. This dissociative imagination of knowledges affects contexts and communities far broader than that of disciplinary sciences because of the social authority and metaphysical archival arbitration of reality by scientism²³⁵ in modernity.

A disconnect between knowledge and ethics encourages reductionist and imperial ideas of truth or abandonment of notions of truth and truthfulness.²³⁶ Truths may be contextual, they

See Stephen C. Meyer, “But Is it Science?” *Signature in the Cell: DNA and the Evidence for Intelligent Design* (New York: HarperOne, 2009): 396-415. Additionally, (dominant) science also relies on faith, creativity, intuition, and non-linear thought—though these may be disavowed, it does not mean that they are not present in the scientific endeavour. Scientists David Bohm and David F. Peat are good examples of practioners who acknowledge and examine some of these aspects of science. See Bohm and Peat, *Science, Order, and Creativity*.

²³⁵ I deploy scientism as shorthand for some of the reductionist ways (instrumentalist reason, efficiency, value-neutrality, etc.) science is influentially understood in modernity, as well as the shaping of modes of thought and practice in modernity via science (ideas of rationality, governance, history, etc.)

²³⁶ The very idea of truth is sometimes seen by postmodernists and poststructuralists as dangerous and associated as coinciding with harmful overconfidence and arrogance. In my view, overconfidence and arrogance are human tendencies that can be practiced and activated irrespective of whether someone claims truthfulness or truth. In fact, I view overconfidence and arrogance as qualities that are counterproductive to the pursuit of truth and the exercising of truthfulness—they flatten and disrupt the personal and interactive responsibility that accompanies the pursuit of truth. As well, the pursuit of truth in no way commits one to believing that there is only one truth, or one way of approaching a matter, or that one cannot be wrong or mistaken or that one cannot change one’s mind. In calling for the need to hold knowledge and ethics together and seeing both as participatory, I am trying to bring attention to a rich, open, and collaborative process of truth-figuring.

I have reflected for many years on the significance of the idea of truth, and its relationship to practices of honesty, sincerity, responsibility and accountability. I thus felt resonance and inspiration along with deepening of clarity and thought when I encountered an eloquent defense of truth and truthfulness (via Bernard Williams) as interconnected virtues and values in Dworkin’s *Justice for Hedgehogs* (see esp. 149-156, 172-180). Also see Bernard Williams, *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* (London: Fontana, 1985), esp. 198-202.

Williams and Dworkin both carry similar positions when it comes to distinguishing the pursuit of truth in science from that in ethics. Williams argues that convergence in science often may have something to do with “things as they actually are” (136) whereas he contends this cannot be said for convergence in ethics. Dworkin, with a great sense of humour, and detailed elaboration, contends that

may be uncertain, they may be distinctive, they may be fallible and that makes them contributors to varied processes and geographies of reflective consciousness, not indeterminate or non-existent. Truths are not solely related to power or social construction of reality—they also need to be acknowledged and engaged in relation to genuine and conscious processes of awareness, learning and growth, involving sincerity, honesty, responsibility, etc. As geographies of awareness and growth arise from the whole of our perceptual being, and traverse contexts of participation, professional, personal, social, knowledge may be understood as integrative, connective, and alive. The dissociation of knowledges from justice, of truths from beauty and goodness, allow the inhumanity and ecocidal irrationality of colonial-capitalist opportunistic

scientific knowledge cannot determine ethical evaluations – ethics stands independently in that no “morons” (moral particles) need to be discovered or connected with in order to feel, think, and act ethically and morally (122). I think this is a powerful and rich articulation. Where I part ways from Dworkin is that I think there are very important interrelationships between how truth is pursued in science internally and the values that are articulated as informing the pursuit of science. In my view, if science is rigidly gatekept epistemically and ontically, it is distanced from significant ethical, social, and epistemic responsibilities. And in my discussions in this chapter, I am not seeking to erase clarifying distinctions between science and ethics but rather emphasizing and exploring their interrelationship. I believe these connections need further discussion as part of the public responsibility of curator-citizens.

I would like to also comment that the role and process of convergence with regard to evidence in science needs intricate reflection. For an exploration of how the idea of scientific consensus can be misleading and harmful, if rooted in the assumption that unanimity is what indicates correctness and constitutes authority, see John Beatty and Alfred Moore, “Should We Aim for Consensus?” *Episteme: A Journal of Social Epistemology* 7.3 (2010): 198-214. Beatty and Moore argue that consensus needs to be thought of more in terms of “deliberative quality” (209) and “deliberative acceptance” (210), where in disagreement or divergence is respected and epistemically treated in an equal and serious manner. They discuss epistemic justice in relation to dissenters within scientific fields. My focus is on extending the ecology of epistemic justice to include overall thinking, practices, and values of science and for there to be a meaningful recognition of sciences outside labs and academic disciplines. Caring to thoughtfully and openly engage epistemic and ontic diversity, I contend, enriches and deepens both knowledges and ethics.

agendas to be rationalized, to hide under the pernicious cover of value-neutrality.²³⁷ It is my view that a powerful way to challenge reified and disembodied constructs of knowledge is to connect science to a wider archival conversation, one rooted within a broader ecology of knowledge and value, empiricism and community, public reason and democracy. Connecting knowledges and ethics or in other words holding truths and goodness together provides space and opportunity for constructive, creative and caring—moral forms of epistemology—to be visibilized, articulated, and expanded.

Archiving, in the imagination of its bases and functions, inherits several strands of the legacy of scientism, including the notion that what is real and empirical is objectively true outside of value and community, experience and participation. Looking at the interrelationship of science, archiving, and value is thus an effective way of expanding epistemic and ethical

²³⁷ A simple example of this is the powerful discourse on the economy, specifically the irrational position that unbridled economic growth is an end in itself even if it contributes to irreversible damage to the environment and achieves little in terms of actually improving lives. I think many strains of Enlightenment thought encourage seeing this irrationality for what it is but what still astounds me is the incredible authority and force a reified idea of economic progress – economics as some value-neutral activity – carries within the modern order.

As I was revising this chapter, I learned about 16-year old Sam Harrison's testimony to a panel reviewing the proposal to build the Enbridge pipeline in British Columbia. *The Globe and Mail* reported, "Mr. Harrison, a Grade 11 student at Prince of Wales Secondary School, said it's time for a moral argument against the pipeline, as environmental and economic appeals have so far failed to kill the proposal" (Ansari). In the transcript of his oral testimony to the panel, Harrison asks the panel to imagine his future and that of his children and if it is morally right to put the lives of future generations at risk for short-sighted gains. I strongly believe that such articulations of value are crucial – they are moral epistemologies that can allow us to make more connected arguments and better social decisions. See Sadiya Ansari, "Teen Activist Strikes Nerve With Statement to Pipeline Hearing." *Globeandmail.com* The Globe and Mail, 06 Feb. 2013. Web. Mar. 3, 2013. Also see Sam Harrison, "Transcript: Teen Envisions Bleak Future in Statement to Pipeline Review Panel." *Globeandmail.com*. The Globe and Mail, Feb. 05 2013. Web. 3 Mar. 2013.

conversations regarding archiving. Key grounds of archival thought and practice, whether that of power and authority, media and technology, context and worldview, history and memory, can be creatively opened up by being explored in terms of value-context, positioning, and substance.

For example, what is seen to constitute technology is often viewed as being closely correlated to science, relating to public applications of or practical action based on scientific exploration and knowledge.²³⁸ The idea of media and technology as tools, as pertaining largely to matters of practical application, is interconnected with the public and professional perception of science as being concerned with finding out about how things really are without regard to value, context, and experience. These perceptions and understandings inform archiving in that archiving is, in its “practical bases,” conceived of as neutral—the material acts of recording, storing, shaping, accessing, etc., via various forms of media and technology and various modes of classificatory and organizational design. To those of us who live deeply embedded within a specific technological milieu closely correlated to modern science and rely upon its entangled technological devices and infrastructures, it can easily come to seem that technologies are really just means to an end. But as Ursula Franklin has eloquently argued, technologies are connected to mindsets, theories, practices, and relations and profoundly modify, shape, and direct these versus carrying a neutral social presence.²³⁹ It assists to understand technology more contextually, plurally and holistically if instrumental efficacy or practical action is not collapsed

²³⁸ What I am highlighting here is one common public perception of technology today that can often be shared by scientists as well. This understanding is thoughtfully and critically engaged in Maarten Franssen, Gert-Jan Lokhorst, Ibo van de Poel, “Philosophy of Technology.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta. Stanford University, Spring 2010. Web. 10 Feb. 2013. The entry includes delineation of various ways modern science and technology may be seen as interrelated as well as distinct.

²³⁹ See Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*.

with value neutrality. Instrumental efficacy gathers its meaning and substance via its relationship to individual and collective goals and aspirations, values and journeys, agencies and realizations. In seeing technology in relation to ethical and moral outlooks, connectively seeing knowledges, including histories and memories, as transformative modes of perception and agency, archiving can be located and illuminated in facets of wholeness or continuity.

For instance, a community's stories can be recorded to preserve them for future generations. The stories—information, knowledges, understandings, contexts, and worldviews of that community—in one archival framework can be viewed as primarily residing in the recorded materials or creations, requiring use of technologies like a tape-recorder, video camera, etc. These archival modes of engagement, even narrowly construed, can be vital enactors of advocacy and activism, resilience and creativity. In part, what gives authority to the archival outlook just briefly sketched is that the idea of technology behind it is congruent with scientism (a tape recorder is a communications technology, listening and sharing are not hegemonically defined as such). What is being recorded is too often deemed inert and not technological, not material in the way physicality of objects are to be empirically understood within scientism. In other words, experience and perception, relationship and engagement are seen to be external to archival materiality.

A transformative bases and understanding of archiving becomes both more visible and consciously integrative if the very existence, survival, and healthy continuity of the community in question are connected with as primary archival contexts themselves. In other words, conditions, actions, and relations, within and outside, that assist in the flourishing and renewal of the community are profound activations of archiving, enabling the living, evolving archive that a community is. Ethics is thus at the very heart of archiving, not an adjunct to it.

The Zapatista movement²⁴⁰ is a good example to illustrate different strands of archival understandings and activations. The movement made effective and powerful use of the internet and benefited from thoughtful media coverage when it first came to global attention in 1994.²⁴¹ The movement's communiqué on December 30, 2012 acknowledges both "the good fortune of the honest and noble attention of various communications media" and how "this has been completely erased by their [media's] later attitude."²⁴² The communiqué goes on to state "those who wagered that we only existed in the communications media and that, with the siege of lies and silence they created we would disappear, were mistaken. When there were no cameras, microphones, pens, ears, or gazes, we continued to exist."²⁴³ The communiqué details the various initiatives the Zapatistas have been collaboratively enacting and that they have been there all along, living, envisioning, constructing a "new form of social life."²⁴⁴ Articulations in the communiqué, in the context of interrelationship and value in archiving, may be seen to exemplify that ways we live, relate, and act carry empirical relevance and material impact irrespective of

²⁴⁰ The Zapatista movement is based in the Chiapas region of Mexico, strongly grounded in Indigenous communities there. It is a movement for broadened Indigenous and citizenship rights, demanding democratic transparency and liberation for the entire Mexican national community. It locates Indigenous peoples and their histories, memories, and worldviews at the heart of an incisive understanding of modernity's profound violence and contradictions *and* central to global imaginations for justice and democratization within a much longer and plural legacy of humanity. For a sense of the vision and demands of the Zapatista movement, see "The People of the Color of the Earth" and "The Fourth Declaration," *The Zapatista Reader*, ed. Tom Hayden (New York: Nation Books, 2001): 107-114 and 239-249.

²⁴¹ For a discussion of the role of the internet in relation to the Zapatista movement, see Maria Elena Martinez-Torres, "Civil Society, the Internet, and the Zapatistas," *Peace Review* 13:3 (2001): 347-355.

²⁴² See "EZLN Comunicado: Zapatistas Announce Next Steps." *Roarmag.org*. Roar Collective, 3 Jan. 2013. Web. 23 Jan. 2013.

²⁴³ Ibid.

²⁴⁴ Ibid.

whether such activations are honored in dominant power/knowledge nexuses or catch in the reductionist ways solidity or presence is codified by scientism. In other words, although ethical being or re/memberings of archives, for instance, may be denied presence in dominant narratives of reality *and* materiality, they are in actuality all around us to define and inhabit ourselves, in our daily life, all our relationships, and in our local, national, and planetary backyards. Within such a conception, elements like solidarity, empathy, resilience, and generosity, for instance, are part and parcel of archival thought and action, its technological and epistemological dynamics.²⁴⁵ The flip side of this understanding is that what we may codify as written, oral, visual or another form of archival existence is an insufficient description—any mode of archiving emerges in its ecological view when looked at in terms of embodiment i.e. its participatory, entangled context, meaning, and movement.

Such an ecological view is not only conducive to understanding social movements, it can be helpful as an overall archival orientation. I will illustrate my point by deploying the example of painting, a useful example as propositions abound regarding the mutating nature of painting and its relevance or lack thereof in modernity/postmodernity.²⁴⁶ To contextualize my example, I

²⁴⁵ I want to clarify that I do not think only of certain narrowly conceived “positive” aspects of an ethic of care. Understanding a full range of emotions and behavior as part of what caring may entail is important for compassion as well as textured understanding of moral and ethical processes. Crucially, agency and responsibility, contextual and varied as it may be, can be exercised in relation to what caring shores up for us, how we learn from it and choose to respond to it. Robert C. Solomon in *A Passion for Justice* is exemplary in frankly and insightfully looking at the centrality of emotions to justice without partitioning emotions into good and bad.

²⁴⁶ For example, painter Frank Paitek participating in a discussion on re-enchantment discusses his ongoing experience with the narrative of the death of painting in the artworld (176-177). See “The Art Seminar,” *Re-Enchantment*, eds. James Elkin and David Morgan (New York: Routledge, 2009). He describes that from the very beginning of his time in art school in the early 1960s “the dynamic of projected restriction and denial by critical forces arrayed against what I was interested in, was inscribed in

will very briefly discuss the narrative of painting that Peter Weibel constructs in the context of co-curating the exhibition *Making Things Public* with Bruno Latour.²⁴⁷ Weibel's thoughts on painting are instructive in that he is a well-established figure in the artworld and he is constructing his narrative within an exploration of art and democracy within an exhibition framed in relation to seriously rethinking and opening up democracy.²⁴⁸ Weibel outlines how painting no longer had to be concerned with representing "visible reality" with the advent of photography, with this shift leading to an autonomy in painting that inspired abstractions of form, color and experience, to finally making action outside of the canvas/frame a central/new aspect of contemporary art.²⁴⁹ Weibel goes on to label painting as a passive or non-interactive form of art,²⁵⁰ a "closed object"²⁵¹ mirroring modernity's industrial outlook; in contrast, he asserts that "the rules of the game of art are transformed with events and situations, from Fluxus to Happenings, from Actionism to Performance."²⁵² "The 'open project,'" Weibel outlines, "is followed by 'open systems' and finally by... 'open fields of enactment,' in an epoch that is based

my knowledge-base" (177). Paitek observes that the proclamations against painting were about other people imposing their outlook rather than having to really do with painting itself (178). In an earlier part of the discussion, he refers to the sense of power brokers in the artworld like to carry, making grand proclamations regarding what kind of times we live in and what direction and mode art needs to take on (141). As an undergraduate and graduate student in an art history program, and in my professional curatorial experience, I observed this entitlement to make grand historicizations and pronouncements—the acceptance of such a mentality and practice were and are still alive and well.

²⁴⁷ See Peter Weibel, "Art and Democracy," in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Wiebel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005):1008-37.

²⁴⁸ See Bruno Latour, "From Realpolitik to Dingpolitik or How to Make Things Public" in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Wiebel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005): 4-31.

²⁴⁹ Weibel, 1029; 1029-30.

²⁵⁰ Ibid. , 1031.

²⁵¹ Ibid. , 1034.

²⁵² Ibid. , 1021.

on digital information revolution.”²⁵³ Such proclamations, influenced by Weibel’s framing of technology, not only art historical socialization, are aprioristic judgments. There is a presumption that painting in its existence and meaning is fixed by a certain sweeping, universally relevant historical narrative regarding crisis of representation and correlated developments in what is authoritatively configured as modern and contemporary art.

Aprioristic judgments of painting as well as that of the materiality of artistic practice (including notions of painting as a homogenous, given “medium”) close themselves off from the ethical and epistemological endeavour of genuinely interacting with and learning about diverse reasons and ways people exercise creative perception and activity. As well, aprioristic modes of narrativization like Weibel’s reveal historicizations within the artworld as many a time not only Eurocentric but also quite parochial in that they turn specific accounts internal to small yet hyperprivileged landscape of museological, collecting and art historical endeavours into *the* participatory archival ecology for understanding painting or other forms of practice. Artist Mayumi Oda recently painted a new series wherein with each brush stroke she prayed for the nuclear energy related tragedy in Japan, both recently and in the past, to transmute into something beautiful, a harmonious way of being with the earth.²⁵⁴ These paintings are neither passive for her, nor passive in relation to what they materialize as well as carry the potential to materialize (the virtual materialities present in interactive process and movement). Oda’s work in *A Prayer for the New Birth of Japan* is the activation of witnessing and transmutation, not a

²⁵³ Weibel, 1021.

²⁵⁴ See Mayumi Oda’s statement for her exhibition, *A Prayer for the New Birth of Japan*. *Honolulu Museum of Art*. Honolulu Museum of Art, n.d. Web. 3 Feb. 2013. Oda also shares her process at her personal website <<http://mayumioda.net>>.

representation of it.²⁵⁵ Experiences and perceptions of those who encounter her work are also interactive modes of relationship and materialization.

Scientism has assisted in congealing as common sense many problematic aspects of art historical and art world narratives—from notions of intellectualism and conceptualism that are narrow with regard to how intelligence and the aesthetic intertwine in life and world-making as I illustrated in earlier chapters to energizing of homogenous, empty containers of “medium” (painting, film, architecture, installation, etc.) as organizational tropes for historization or theorization that I challenge in this chapter. Curatorially, an ethic of care demands cognizance of materiality in its participatory, dialogic, and constitutional conceptions versus unconsciously or consciously energizing aprioristic judgments of medium, materiality, and interactivity.

Rather than thinking of archival data and records or modes of archiving within narrow confines—instead of thinking of materiality (include artistic mediums) in an objectified frame via scientism—seeing the interrelationships among science, archiving, and value is helpful in reaching connective understandings. Connective understandings assist in re/orienting archiving as a living, collaborative process of knowledge-making and truth-seeking, co-constituted with ethical imaginations and practices, gathering its contextual meaning via embodiment in individual and collective striving.

My rethinking of archiving has implications relating to the very understanding of what is involved in curation. Curatorial practice, whether located in the scientific or artistic sphere, is a

²⁵⁵ For an intimate glimpse of some of Mayumi Oda’s creative process and its interrelationship to her life and worldview, see her interviews in *Who Does She Think She is?* Dir. Pamela Tanner Boll, 2008. Also see Mayumi Oda, *I Opened the Gate Laughing: An Inner Journey* (San Francisco: Chronicle Books, 2002).

way of archiving diverse kinds of data, materials, and practices. The selection, ordering and conservation of materials, the narratives and thematics developed, the activities and events generated, all help actively archive and shape culture/science. In short, curation is a significant arena for and of archiving. My delineation of how ethics is profoundly constitutive of archival relations and practice provides further public reasons for inhabiting curation as an ethic of care while illuminating ways of enriching curatorial thought-reason-action. The interrelationship of truths and goodness or epistemologies and ethics I make a case for above can be articulated in the context of curation as the interconnectedness of curation and care.

The materiality of an archive and its emergent quality includes the kinds of relationships that are cultivated, the emotional processes involved, forming an embodied, participatory ecology. Thus, it is not solely or necessarily art historical knowledge or another kind of professional expertise that may be required of a curator. The ethical and moral outlook, relations, and practices of a curator—their activations as a human being, their connectedness—play a vital, constitutive role in the kind of integrative curatorial impact they are able to forge, professionally, in community, and in the broader world.²⁵⁶ Archiving in its interrelationship to value makes explicit, when deployed to illuminate curatorial practice, how transformative curation is interrelated to creative and ethical flourishing within a holistic, cohesive framework.

²⁵⁶ Of course, these outlooks and qualities do have a bearing on the kind of *case* various curators make for their interpretative and facilitative practice *within* academic or other modes of together-doing, whether codified as culture or science.

5.2 Expanded Empiricism, Sciences, and Archiving

If you allow a role in your story for the singularity on the one hand and for its expression in quality on the other, then you are confronted with an *expanded empirical field*. The classically empirical assumptions and methods of science operate selectively in a limited empirical reality.

—Brian Massumi²⁵⁷

Science is concerned with empiricism, the pursuit of knowledge rooted in perception, experience, experimentation, and evidence. Experiential bases of perception and knowledge are in dynamic interaction with conceptualizations, including individual and collective idea-practices of what constitutes good and reliable knowledge. As experience, concepts, and experiments are entangled, empiricism is better understood holistically. Empiricism is singular as well as shared, part of everyday experience as well as communities of practice.

Opening up empiricism opens up epistemological conversations around science and encourages explorations of sciences' connections to value. Science is one of the most influential

²⁵⁷ Brian Massumi, "Too-Blue: Color Patch for an Expanded Empiricism," *Parables of the Virtual: Affect, Movement, Sensation* (Durnham: Duke University Press, 2002): 235. I relate to empirical reality as being participatory and open, as having range and shades. Thus, when I encountered Massumi's articulation of an "expanded empirical field," I felt both affirmed and excited. Massumi deploys an open idea of empiricism to bring humanities into new kinds of conversations with science, which he argues is needed more for the "conceptual health" of humanities (21). My aim is different. It relates to clarifying how understandings of materiality and the practices of empiricism are connected, and how opening up these key concepts and practices can enable visibilization of the entanglement of embodiment, ethics, epistemology and archiving within a democratic ecology.

In relation to creative practice, emotions, and psyche, I have encountered dismissals of the so-called real world value of such processes and enactments; my reclamation of empiricism is part of acknowledging the world-shaping, reality-making contributions of these processes and enactments. At the same time, it is to bring attention to the ways scientific practice and cognition are a subset of human consciousness and relationships, of which creativity and emotions are integral aspects.

archival modes. Expanded bases of empiricism and plurality of science—sciences—aid pursuit of archival coexistence and wholeness in an open mode of dialogue and learning, co-participation and building. Explorations of creative practices as part of empirical process and movement and of sciences as part of experience and value are thus opened up as sites of curatorial facilitation and collaborative endeavour.

As sociologist and philosopher Bruno Latour encapsulates it, “...loss of authority [of Science] turns out to be compensated a hundredfold by the possibility of exploring in common what a good fact is, what a legitimate member of the collective is. If we need less Science, we need to count much more on the sciences; if we need fewer indisputable facts, we need much more collective experimentation* on what is essential and what is accessory.”²⁵⁸ Curators, in straddling university, museum and other public institutions, in carrying authority across codified spheres of together-doing, can play a vital role in supporting, instigating, and mediating collective experimentations—archival processes, relations and practices—that actively build a “good common world.”²⁵⁹ “Common” is not invoked here to imply imposition, homogeneity or a priori unity but acknowledgement and activation of relationships and responsibilities of ethical co-habitation.*

²⁵⁸ See Bruno Latour, *The Politics of Nature: Bringing Sciences into Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004): 223. The asterisks next to “Science*” and “experimentation*” are Latour’s. He defines these terms in specific ways and to keep the reader alert to this he labels key terms with an asterisk, with definitions provided in a glossary at the back of the book. Latour defines Science as “politicization of the sciences by (political) epistemology in order to make public life impotent by bringing to bear on it the threat of salvation of an already unified nature*” (249).

Bruno Latour very thoughtfully argues for restructuring the fact/value question so that it involves more extensive due process and deeply inclusive representation in reality-making (91;127). See “New Separation of Powers,” *The Politics of Nature*, 91-127. My thesis articulates a related position but also one emergent from and articulated along different sets of entrypoints and pathways. A focus on archiving, nature of consciousness, and the erotic are one example of this different route.

²⁵⁹ Latour, *The Politics of Nature*, 239.

How sciences may be envisioned and practiced are connected to understandings and constructions of experience and reality²⁶⁰—they play a crucial role in archival imagination, orientation, movement, and materialization. Sciences can be highly specific and rooted in

²⁶⁰ A powerful avenue of thinking through sciences versus Science is to focus on the nature of experience, perception, and observation and its interrelationships with participatory reality-making. This focus can lead to fruitful interactions between different empirical traditions, for instance Buddhist and mainstreamed sciences, or Indigenous sciences and mainstreamed sciences. For an example of the rich possibilities of critical and creative engagement between Buddhism and science, see B. Alan Wallace, ed., *Buddhism and Science: Breaking New Ground*. For a powerful critique of how scientific reductionism of experience and the world can be incredibly harmful, especially in relation to colonial denial of Indigenous realities, experiences, and sciences, see Betty Bastien, *Blackfoot Ways of Knowing: The Worldview of the Siksikaitsitapi* (Calgary: Calgary University Press, 2004). For a rich philosophical account of observation, closely focused on science, yet one that pays serious attention to the nature of everyday experience, see Hans Radder, *The World Observed/The World Conceived*.

Another way of engaging the question of sciences is to look at its multifaceted histories. For example, there are many historical philosophical and scientific strands that came out of Europe that challenged reductionistic, passive notions of experience as well as the natural world. During the time of the European Renaissance, Paracelsus was an interesting, influential figure in terms of how he connected scientific practice to nature and cosmos, spirituality and religion; in terms of philosophy, the focus on dynamism and becoming in “process philosophy” is a rich countercurrent; during the Enlightenment, the vitalists aimed to, according to Peter Hanns Reill, “reintroduce entities such as active energy (soul in a highly secularized form) and individuality into the inner core of scientific thinking” (9). See Peter Hanns Reill, *Vitalizing Nature in the Enlightenment* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2005). For interdisciplinary engagement and reflection on the Paracelsian legacy, see *Paracelsian Moments: Science, Medicine & Astrology in Early Modern Europe*, ed. Gerhild Scholz Williams and Charles D. Gunnor Jr (Kirkville: Truman State University Press, 2002). For a detailed introduction to process philosophy, see Johanna Seibt, “Process Philosophy.” *The Stanford Encyclopedia of Philosophy*. Ed. Edward N. Zalta. Stanford University, Winter 2012. Web. 23 Nov. 2012. Also see Douglas Browning and William T. Myers, eds., *Philosophers of Process* (New York: Fordham University Press, 1998).

To look at the history and philosophy of science in Europe more closely assists in at least two important ways: 1) it underscores how the questioning of rigid mechanistic thought, impersonal outlook, and separation of values from facts has a long history internal to the discipline of science and the trajectory of modernity, inside and not only outside of Europe and 2) the critique of science and its re/imagination does not break down solely in western/non-western terms but has been and is of concern for individuals and communities in diverse contexts.

situation, context, and community and yet a commons in that relating, responding, gathering, verifying and sharing constitute an empirical process that is constantly activated across community and species boundaries. Individual and collective journeys, human and non-human, are able to enter into constitutional²⁶¹ conversations via epistemic and ontic opening up of sciences, an archival cosmopolitics²⁶² that counters assimilative or reductive engagements rooted in atomized, centric or hyperreal ideas of culture or science.

Epistemic and ontic opening up of sciences translates to opening up of ways knowledges are substantiated, the ways realities are given credence. Expanded empiricism is a way of locating modes of perception and verification, and conceptualizations of good and reliable knowledges, within a democratic and connective ecology. Expanded empiricism may be seen to be a useful way of illuminating active flows between together-doing and materialization, materialization being a socio-natural and politico-ecological process and movement versus primarily objectified physicality. The disappearance of empirical agency and fact-making in everyday contexts and of people from excluded collectivities, including more-than-human social actors, is a significant archival issue. Active recognition and support of archival cosmopolitics, as visibilized by multiplicities of science and expansiveness of materiality and empiricism, open up potentialities of multifaceted recognition and understanding, conscious exchange and

²⁶¹ By constitutional, I mean to imply the very way we think about things as well as a conscious way to articulate the deepest visions of how to live well together.

²⁶² I first encountered the phrase cosmopolitics in Latour (*The Politics of Nature*), who is referencing Isabelle Stenger's articulation of cosmopolitics as a metaphysical enterprise versus one that is multinational. Personally, I connect with cosmopolitics as a question of what Naguib beautifully terms as ways of being that renew relations of "life-giving continuity" in *Radical Consciousness: Inspiring Revolution from Within* (Forthcoming). I see cosmopolitics as including conscious collaborative engagement with the more-than-human world as part of democratic politics and involving cohesive, participatory interrelationships of truth, goodness, and beauty.

connectivity. Archiving may thus be re/imagined as a relational, responsive, and living collaborative process in which ethics, epistemology, embodiment and reality are intimately entangled.

In *The Idea of Justice*, Amartya Sen has eloquently described democracy as a form of public reason, which also connects democracy to ethics and justice.²⁶³ Public reason, according to Sen, arises from processes of comparative broadening, attunement to social realizations on the ground, commitment to representation and accountability, and awareness of the fallible, incomplete, pluralistic yet necessary task of concretely furthering justice.²⁶⁴ Making sciences a form of public reason allows archiving to become open to scrutiny at a constitutional level. This constitutional level is materiality/reality-making and the role of epistemic-social agency in materialization may be articulated as empiricism. Neither empiricism nor materiality are separate from value—they arise from relationships and commitments that are prior to objectification of knowledges, realities, or experiences in multiple ways. Affiliations and connections, emotional and spiritual, physical and social, are thus important to become cognizant of and creatively be responsive versus holding excarnated ideals of detachment and instrumentality as superior modes of archiving the world.

It is one thing to argue that control of variables and abstracted focus allows useful forms of reproducibility and reliability, forms of knowledge efficacious in a limited empirical bandwidth. It is quite another to make Science an imperial mode of truth. Such a manoeuvre can turn contextual usefulness of reduction and generalism in disciplinary sciences to dissociation

²⁶³ See especially “Public Reasoning and Democracy,” in *The Idea of Justice* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2009): 321-415.

²⁶⁴ For a concise outline of this position, see Sen, “Introduction: An Approach to Justice,” in *The Idea of Justice*, 1-27.

and detachment in social imagination, relations, and practices. Democratic participation, human experience, embodiment, social complexity and interconnectedness are all ways of foregrounding the interrelationship of value and archiving, how these interrelationships are integral to archival cosmopolitics.

What may be considered evident or real in an everyday situation or globally is really influenced by science as a lens of modernity. This lens informs influential strands of scientific materialism in which elements like love, for instance, are seen to be illogical or actually non-existent irrespective of deeply felt activations.²⁶⁵ This reductionist idea of reality is rooted in the assumption that it is only Science, with its superior/correct, metaphysical grasp of objects out there that can genuinely determine what is real. This scientism feeds into a priori and non-participatory as well as static and fragmentary ideas of archival materiality—my re/imaging of archiving is a constructive response to such outlooks.

²⁶⁵ Edward Slingerland, a researcher at the University of British Columbia, may be a good example of someone who could be seen as holding such a scientific materialist outlook. He is currently leading the world's largest research project on religion and morality, which illustrates to some extent both the academic and public legitimacy of ideas of scientific materialism. See Douglas Todd, "Smart Atheist Heads \$3-million Grant into Religion and Morality." *Vancouver Sun*, Jan. 2013. Web. 18 Feb. 2013. Slingerland shares his outlook in greater detail in "Let's Get Clear on Materialism." *The Immanent Frame: Secularism, Religion, and the Public Sphere*. Social Sciences Research Council, 1 Aug. 2008. Web. 20 Jan. 2013. Slingerland's stance is that emotional experiences and even notions like free will are really ways our brain and body via our genes are wired for us to understand ourselves and help us survive as a species. He contends that we cannot but operate from these places but that does not make them real (see both blog entry by Slingerland and article by Todd). Slingerland summarizes, "Properly speaking, though, 'our' thinking about or experiencing X is, in fact, nothing more than activity in area Y of the brain (or, more likely, a network of regions)." ("Let's Get Clear on Materialism") Alva Noë's work in *Out of Our Heads* is a powerful rejoinder to reductive notions of experience, explicating how consciousness is not something that "happens inside us like digestion" but "like a work of improvisational music...achieved in action, by us, thanks to our situation in and access to a world we know around us" (186).

Archiving is associated with evidence—material proof—of histories and knowledges and the very solidity of evidence is tied up with what is seen as material, rational, natural, etc., to begin with. Evidence and its consideration also rest on processes of verification. If both evidence and verification are understood processually and experientially, if the world-involving, value-soaked materiality of thought and imagination, relationships and actions, is realized, then archiving emerges as a responsibility-based ethic of materiality as well as the continual dynamic of interconnectional participation. Archiving can then be understood in the context of connectedness and transformation.

The agential, multifaceted, open process of empiricism I discussed prior in this section implies that cognition, including any kind of scientific cognition, arises from relationship and interaction. Our lives are thus substantively material, not epiphenomenally so, and what we see as mind is co-terminus with embodied relationships and practices. The participatory and relational understanding of materiality, of what we archive as real and as existing, makes questions of value and of responsibility central. Actively holistic understandings and activations of archiving are thus not only accurately materialist in outlook and practice, they also make individual lives deeply relevant, and restore the objective importance of love as well as other generative sources of meaning and relationship that archival atomization casts aside.

5.3 Erotic Morality and Archival Materialization

The dichotomy between the spiritual and the political is...false.... For the bridge that connects them is formed by the erotic—the sensual—those physical, emotional, and psychic expressions of what is deepest and strongest and richest within each of us, being shared: the passions of love, in its deepest meanings.

—Audre Lorde²⁶⁶

It seems unlikely that the ethical impulse can be learned primarily from the pages of a book....Still less can it be learned from the screen of a computer. For while these media readily

²⁶⁶ Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic: The Erotic as Power,” *Sister Outsider*, 56. A focus on the erotic has many interesting parallels with what many major philosophers and scholars are bringing attention to with regard to ethics, morality, and justice. Bernard Williams in *Ethics and the Limits of Philosophy* is highly critical of modern moral philosophy’s blinkered deference to “administrative ideas of rationality,” enchantment with a “community of reason” quite distant from “any concrete sense of a particular ethical life,” thereby being less meaningfully connected to human life in various ways than the religion that preceded it (197-198). Robert Solomon in *Spirituality for the Skeptic: The Thoughtful Love of Life* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2002) maps a “*naturalized* spirituality” (xiii), appreciative of science, not limited to religion, based “in an enlarged and enhanced sense of the compassionate ordinary self,” a self “that naturally seeks community and harmony and embraces the natural world.” (139) Solomon’s turn to spirituality also comes from disenchantment with professional philosophy’s arrogance, its obscurities and cleverness, that misses out on the capacity to truly listen (27). Ronald Dworkin in *Justice for Hedgehogs* sees what he calls philosophies of “self-affirmation” as more aligned with ethical and moral unification than Enlightenment thought in which “we are not entitled to think our moral convictions true unless we find these convictions either required by pure reason or produced by something ‘out there’ in the world” (16). “Thus,” Dworkin contends, “was born the Gibraltar of all mental blocks: that something other than value must underwrite value if we are to take value seriously” (16-17). Charles Taylor in *Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1989) also takes to task the narrowness of modern moral philosophy while making a humane, nuanced defense of the positive role not only spirituality but also religion can play in modern life in serving the richest aspects of human life.

engage the thinking mind, they cannot engage the whole of the thinking body (this reflective and sentient organism with its muscles and limbs) in the way that any face-to-face encounter, in the flesh, engages the whole body. It is in the flesh and blood world of our bodily actions and engagements that ethics has its real bearing. It is here, in this irreducibly ambiguous and uncertain land where we live with the whole of our beings—with our hands and our feet and our faces, with our bellies as well as our brains—that we are most vulnerable, most affected by the kindness of others, or by their neglect and disrespect.

—David Abram²⁶⁷

*Erotic morality*²⁶⁸ —moral agency enabled and interwoven with senses, emotions, body, and the psyche—is a powerful, integral form of archiving. My focus on erotic morality is a way of illustrating how love and justice, among other activations of compassionate relationship, are first of all embodied ways of participating-feeling-thinking and essential to ethical-archival materialization. I view the erotic as a re/membering of archiving as insinuated within, what David Abram calls, “utter entanglement of our senses and our sentience within this breathing lattice of intertwined lines and living elements that we call earth.”²⁶⁹ Our inner life, our feelings, our imagination, become erotic modes of relationship and value, creativity and resonant action, via attentiveness to the sensorial body that always already participates in the whole.

²⁶⁷ David Abram, “The Eclipse of the Sensuous.” *Tikkun* Sept-Oct. 2003: 33+. *Canadian Periodicals Index Quarterly*. Web. 22 Jan. 2013.

²⁶⁸ I first encountered the term “erotic morality” in Linda Holler’s *Erotic Morality: The Role of Touch in Moral Agency* (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 2002). My insights around the role of the body and the emotions in ethics and morality were already well formed before I encountered Holler’s work. Her work does not inform what I specifically develop in this section but I do borrow the term “erotic morality” from her as I really appreciate how it works to condense the capacities of eros into a rich, succinct expression. In terms of articulating erotic morality in the context of this chapter, I develop original articulations and connections as well as utilize the ideas of other thinkers where indicated, Audre Lorde being a primary influence.

²⁶⁹ Abram, “The Eclipse of the Sensuous.”

Erotic morality illuminates whole self-knowledge and empowerment as crucial to justice. As poet and activist Audre Lorde beautifully articulates it, “when we begin to live from within outward, in touch with the power of the erotic within ourselves, and allowing that power to inform and illuminate our actions upon the world around us, then we begin to be responsible to ourselves in the deepest sense.”²⁷⁰ Lorde also sees the erotic as a powerful force for liberation in making “acts against oppression...integral with self, motivated and empowered from within.”²⁷¹ Erotic morality is rooted in meaningful, awake, sensorial, passionate connection to self and to others, a kind of connectivity that I see as crucial to the pursuit of ethical and moral integrity as also articulated by philosopher Ronald Dworkin. Dworkin succinctly states, “a person can achieve the dignity and self-respect that are indispensable to a successful life only if he shows respect for humanity itself in all its forms.”²⁷² Artist, writer, and activist Fabiola Nabil Naguib insightfully describes the process of connection and compassion to “all human and non-human relations” as activation of healing, which is “not only a right, but also a responsibility to oneself, others, and the planet.”²⁷³ In short, I see the erotic as centring on embodiment of responsiveness and connectedness, ethical independence and moral integrity. The rich moral agency of the erotic is interlocked with its materiality, its rooting in experience, capturing a crucial aspect of co-constitutive living processes of value and archiving.

If democratizing sciences allows for constitutional archival politics, focusing on the erotic is a way of articulating the embodied, relational, valuational process without which human archival agency and practice could not exist. It is a way of expressing how the world is archived in ways beyond mental understanding, how senses and emotions, body and spirit play a powerful role in connective conviction and discernment. The erotic also assists in existentially relating and

²⁷⁰ Lorde, “Uses of the Erotic,” 58.

²⁷¹ Ibid. , 58.

²⁷² Dworkin, *Justice for Hedgehogs*, 19.

²⁷³ Naguib, *Uninhabiting the Violence of Silencing*, 75.

connecting archival practice to individual journeys within an active perception of interdependence. To explore the intimate connections between eros and materialization—ethical embodiment as archiving—I will primarily engage with the work of Audre Lorde. Since I encountered Lorde’s work over ten years ago, her prescient insights about the erotic have continued to have resonance and relevance to my personal growth and thinking in ways disciplinary academic literature or artworld theorizations rarely do. She writes with unusual clarity, groundedness, and self-sovereignty. Lorde also articulates the erotic within a democratic conception of creativity and with full regard for the role of self-knowledge and empowerment in socio-political transformation.²⁷⁴ As a poet, essayist, and activist very present in what she says, as someone you can sense feeling consciously and deeply in her work, Lorde exemplifies how the erotic can be a profound source of self-determined insight and direction.

Lorde writes that as we tune more into “living as a situation to be experienced and interacted with, we learn more and more to cherish our feelings, and to respect those hidden sources of our power from where true knowledge, and therefore, lasting action comes.”²⁷⁵ Lorde shares her experiential understanding of the “incredible reserve of creativity and power”²⁷⁶ that resides within emotions and feelings—emotions and feelings even when not registered consciously archiving knowledge of the world, growing hidden and deep, there for us to connect with when we are ready “to bear the intimacy of scrutiny and flourish within it.”²⁷⁷ She locates her connection to poetry as the cobbling together of depth of feeling and the sharpness of introspection, defining it as “a revelatory distillation of experience, not the sterile word play that,

²⁷⁴ See “Uses of the Erotic,” esp. 58.

²⁷⁵ Lorde, “Poetry is Not a Luxury,” *Sister Outsider*, 37.

²⁷⁶ *Ibid.*, 36.

²⁷⁷ *Ibid.*

too often, the white fathers distorted the word *poetry* to mean...in order to cover a desperate wish for imagination without insight.”²⁷⁸ Poetry, in Lorde’s vision, “forms the quality of the light within which we predicate our hopes and dreams toward survival and change, first made into language, then into idea, then into more tangible action”²⁷⁹—it is “not only dream and vision; it is the skeleton architecture of our lives.”²⁸⁰

Lorde’s idea of poetry as the “skeletal architecture of our lives” brings together the intricate, non-dualistic connections among body, emotions, thought, imagination, and action. Poetry for Lorde involves spaciousness to tune into what may be “nameless and formless” yet “already felt.”²⁸¹ The not-yet-consciously arrived emotion and idea, vision and understanding, as it becomes illuminated and integrated, allows one to forge self-actualized convictions, convictions that consciously inform how we relate and act. Lorde sees this personal, embodied attunement to the erotic as essential to the capacity to fully feel, to genuinely relate, to be acutely

²⁷⁸ Lorde, “Poetry is Not a Luxury,” 37.

²⁷⁹ Ibid. Douglas Cardinal in *Native Creative Process* also delineates the transformative power of thought, of how it is connected to the creative manifestation of reality and action:

There is power in every individual because there is power in the word. Humans are very powerful in this way. To turn the realm of thought, which is abstract potential, into a thing in the physical world, through word, is powerful creativity as a natural act. The essence of creativity in all things is what makes the universe shift...When we speak we declare something. We create it and then it can be. It can become action. So it is a sacred act (89).

The denial of the transformative and creative nature of idea-thought-action is part and parcel of how experience, emotions, and imagination are discounted from their central role in responsibility, ethics, and justice.

²⁸⁰ Lorde, “Poetry is Not a Luxury,” 38.

²⁸¹ Ibid. , 36.

responsible towards oneself and others.²⁸² How does the erotic so defined intersect with archiving? I view the erotic as the felt yet untapped, vast creative archival resource connected to all that we encounter as well as an embodied, conscious form of ethical-archival knowing and materialization. And one reason I deploy Lorde's thoughts on poetry to further a discussion on materiality, value, and archiving beyond scientism is to demonstrate that poetry, among other creative forms, understood within the dynamic of the erotic, has the capacity to capture profound empirical processes and insights.

Another significant reason for my engagement with the erotic is to make the body central to discussions of archiving and value. In order to see the ethical role of the body, it is important to not locate embodiment within reductive ways of measuring changes in bodily states—embodiment rather relates to the perceptive intelligence of the body. The erotic is a way of linking materiality and reality-making via the role of the body and psyche in consciousness. Philosopher Jesse Prinz beautifully articulates this in the context of elaborating emotions as “embodied appraisals,” arguing that we need to “put meaning into our bodies and let perceptions of the heart reveal our situation in the world.”²⁸³ The erotic locates the body within internal life, an internal life that is always already world-involved as well as consciously world-involving, making its boundaries permeable via *felt* participation. The erotic is a process of ethical and moral perception and discernment that widens and deepens through emotional awareness and awakeness—it is a way of underscoring the receptive, ethical, agential dynamics of archiving from within the body and the context of inner life.

²⁸² See “Poetry is Not a Luxury” and “Uses of the Erotic.” The erotic remains palpable, explicitly and implicitly, throughout *Sister Outsider*.

²⁸³ Jesse Prinz, “Embodied Emotions,” in Robert Solomon, ed., *Thinking about Feeling: Contemporary Philosophers on Emotion* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004): 58.

The erotic encompasses multifaceted knowledge, emotional, physical, mental, and spiritual. It includes learning to sense, honor and cultivate the participatory bases of consciousness, to see how that participatory bases opens up to claiming of relationship to self (for example, personal power and self-respect) *and* to others (for example, connectedness and moral enactments). In other words, the erotic is centred in embodied and connective consciousness, which goes beyond mental cognition.²⁸⁴ In addition, the idea of consciousness as participatory aligns well with the burgeoning understanding in philosophy (Solomon) and science (Varela) that ethics involves “knowing-how” (intelligent action, skill, responsiveness) more than “knowing-that” (propositional knowledge) or at least a strongly balanced partnership of the two.²⁸⁵ In other words, intellectual knowledge is not to be collapsed with erotic intelligence, centred on receptive and responsive ways of being and doing that are co-constitutive of profound forms of knowing.

A cohesive, holistic ecology of archiving involves paying attention to how we live, feel, remember and act versus condensing archiving only into a professional practice or narrow notions of media, etc. The erotic is a succinct way of capturing such a living articulation of archiving — the erotic locates knowledge at its richest as being lived and transformational, attuned to the interactive and imaginative bases of experience, its creative dynamic. The power of the erotic to inform, direct and shape lives — its transformative archival power — is

²⁸⁴ Lorde holds a related position in that she locates the erotic within a non-rational (*not* irrational) plane (“Uses of the Erotic,” 53) and acknowledges the role of thinking without opposing it to feeling. The latter element becomes even clearer when one reads Lorde’s thoughts on the erotic shared in interviews over the years. See especially the Interview with Marion Kraft, “The Creative Use of Difference,” 148.

²⁸⁵ See Robert Solomon, “Emotions, Thoughts, and Feelings: Emotions as Engagements with the World,” in *Thinking about Feeling*, 76-88 and Francisco Varela, *Ethical Know-How: Action, Wisdom, and Cognition* (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1999).

intricately mapped out in the work of writer Assia Djébar. Djébar's sensitivity to the erotic and her ability to translate it movingly into narrative—to reclaim the freedom that the category of art/fiction permits to inhabit multifaceted re/membering—makes her a particularly meaningful example in the context of the current discussion. In *So Vast the Prison*, in the midst of many father tongues, including French and Arabic, language is re/membered into an embodied mother tongue, a reservoir of the deepest of feelings and rhythms, making it speak the histories, realities, voices and journeys of ancestral and contemporary Amazigh²⁸⁶ and Arab women. Instead of utilizing the colonial norms of historicism, Djébar subverts the borders of fiction to write in/of/with “the mother tongue that had shown me her teeth.”²⁸⁷ As the protagonist in Djébar's “novel” reflects, “the voice spun out clear and hard; it did not speak in French or Arabic or Berber but in some language from the hereafter spoken by women who had vanished before me and into me.”²⁸⁸ *So Vast the Prison* is a middle-class, Algerian woman's intimate journey back to herself and her creativity. A journey that begins in, what from the outside may seem as insignificant, the inner intensity of an affair, a woman's desire to dance and to more fully feel that lodges within her the urge to grow into herself.²⁸⁹ In the text, through connecting with “what is erased in the heart,” it becomes possible to meaningfully reclaim “what is erased in

²⁸⁶ The Amazigh are Indigenous peoples of North Africa. They form a strong indigenous presence across contemporary nation-state boundaries except in the case of Egypt, where the primary Indigenous group are the Copts. Amazigh is the self-designated name of this Indigenous community and the colonial term still often deployed to refer to them is Berber. Usage of “Berber” is still in use as a general reference by Amazigh peoples.

²⁸⁷ Assia Djébar, *So Vast the Prison*, trans. Betsy Wing (New York: Seven Stories Press, 1999): 15.

²⁸⁸ Ibid. , 105.

²⁸⁹ See Djébar, “What is the Erased in the Heart,” *So Vast the Prison*, 18-119.

stone”(colonial archives, official histories, archaeology).²⁹⁰ In the final section, *So Vast the Prison* evokes how these efforts are not disparate but an essential part of “grasp[ing] the rhythm, the noises from submerged depths believed lost.”²⁹¹ Djebbar and Lorde’s work underscores the importance of conceptualizing our journeys as human beings as an integral form of archiving; our emotive, affective, bodily, psychic, creative re/membering as transformative archiving.

The erotic pertains to living with openness and attunement, self-trust and other-regarding movement versus being locked in pre-conceived frameworks. The senses, body, and psyche are co-collaborators in this process, though of course how one learns to grow from them and to trust them as well as cultivate healthy relations with them is pivotal. Trust in the astuteness of our senses is not to be confused with immediacy or transparency of the kind that involves giving credence to quick to rise reactivity, ideological socialization, fear, or narrowness; this trust is rather concerned with creating space and learning to heartfully feel, to truly think, to surrender to

²⁹⁰ Djebbar, *So Vast the Prison*, 9.

²⁹¹ Ibid. , 279. Djebbar describes many of her novels as involving the intense play of emotion and memory, an effort against disappearance. She explains, “Yes, to write, the ear keen, the senses sharp, it would not only come from my personal memory, but also even from strangers, on the street, a remark, a broken voice, a short laugh, I receive them by pure chance, me, listener of things tossed in the air; I suddenly believe that I am the only one to fleetingly feel a moment of pure life, of life-bubbles in the air, random words, but also, it’s the life to seize, its ephemeral flash! In the night, this instant suddenly makes me legacy of memory at the point of dissolving, unless precisely by chance, my writing just touches the source....” See “Assia Djebbar: The Tireless Walker of Memory.” Interview with Nathalie Colleville. *Prague Writers Festival*, 14 Jan. 2010. Web. 22 Jan. 2013. There is a complex interplay between Djebbar’s sensitivity as a person and the sensitivity of her ‘fiction.’ I use ‘fiction’ in quotes for several reasons, including the fact that Djebbar makes extensive use of history, political awareness, and personal biography in her work. As well, Djebbar’s work is also very consciously a form of ancestral remembering and a way of creating space for women to breathe, to feel, to connect with avenues of transforming social relations. Some of these aspects of Djebbar’s work, with specific reference to *So Vast the Prison*, are discussed in Joyce Lazarus, “Writing as Resistance: Assia Djebbar’s *Vaste est la Prison*,” *Journal of International Women’s Studies* 11.4 (2010): 83-96.

as well as cultivate radical illumination, personal will and integrity. This process of awakening and developing relationship to the erotic may be understood as articulating the importance of healing—the erotic sheds light on the profound interconnections between healing and justice.

Healing may be described as an ethical and moral dynamic, in which sensing, feeling, reflecting, expressing, connecting are integral archival materializations and contributions.

Healing, thus articulated, may be viewed as a form of expansive empiricism that embraces emotions and the body—an intimate, embodied relationality to self and the world, an erotic morality, in which creativity, responsibility and power, even in the face of much trivialization and brutality, are gathered. Fabiola Nabil Naguib articulates healing as also involving awakening, restoration, and sustenance of one's love and compassion to “the whole of humanity—all human and non-human relations”²⁹²—connectedness. Connectedness allows for an embrace as intimate as the self and as expansive as the cosmos, in the same breath.

Connectedness is rooted in *felt* experience and the centrality of the body in experience acts as a powerful reminder of our vulnerability *and* of our aliveness. David Abram provides a humble reminder that “whether we are plugging ourselves into cyberspace or simply synapsing ourselves to the page of a new novel, whether we are mathematically exploring the submicroscopic realm of vibrating, ten-dimensional strings or pondering the ultra-vast tissue of galaxies revealed by a new generation of radio-telescopes, we cannot help but interpret whatever we glimpse of these worlds according to predilections derived from the one world in which we uninterruptedly live — this bodily place, this palpable earth where we still breathe and burp and make love.”²⁹³ What we sense, feel, and cherish, our embodied, valuational experience, arises out of the interrelational

²⁹² Naguib, “Roots of Racism,” *Uninhabiting the Violence of Silencing*, 75.

²⁹³ Abram, “Eclipse of the Sensuous.”

fabric of socio-physical life. The interrelational basis of consciousness is reflected in our emotional lives in that emotions acknowledge our connection to others, to situations and events, what we perceive as important and just. I wholeheartedly agree with Robert Solomon that “emotions are not just evidence or ‘intuitions’ that will (or won’t) support one or another theory of justice; they are the very substance of our sense of justice.”²⁹⁴ Our bodies, our senses, our emotions have the perceptive and creative capacity to ground ourselves to ourselves, to others, to the earth, to orient us to what is precious, what is truthful, what is meaningful.

What are the curatorial implications of acknowledging the perceptual as well as value bases of archival labour? What meaning does the democratic and embodied human and non-human bases of archiving carry for the curatorial field? It is a call for curation to respond to dissociation and detachment, whether displayed via claims of value-neutrality, epistemic colonialism, or erotic denial. It is equally a call for curatorial embodiment of ethical and conscious affiliations and connections.

My archival re/imagining lends weight and insight to my emphasis that the personal is also curatorial in a substantive way, challenging and transforming what is considered proper to curation. For example, do we exemplify love as scholars or curators? Professionally, love is often not seen as something to bring to our work each day—it is often deemed disparagingly sentimental, personal, partial, unreliable. Fear, anxiety, or ambivalence of explicitly and consciously bringing emotions and the body to our professional capacities is in part connected to the power of scientism in modernity as well as other trajectories of disenchantment and exarnation. But love is a profound form of public reason, central to knowledge, ethics, and politics.

²⁹⁴ Solomon, *A Passion for Justice*, 33.

Charles Taylor has argued that to give up on the spirit, on our “strongest aspirations towards hypergoods” leaves us feeling cramped, not unburdened.²⁹⁵ He states that it is crucial “we enable ourselves to recognize the goods to which we cannot but hold allegiance in their full range.”²⁹⁶ Articulating and reconciling with these aspirations Taylor believes “will open us to our moral sources, to release their force in our lives.”²⁹⁷ In exploring interrelationship and value in archiving, my aim is to inspire erotic courage in curatorial practice—courage to be radically open, sensitive and contemplative in conviction, integrative in outlook and practice, and bold in connecting to the deepest of aspirations, individually and collectively, making them a living source of strength in our lives.

²⁹⁵ Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, 107.

²⁹⁶ Ibid.

²⁹⁷ Ibid.

Chapter 6: Cosmopolitical Ecologies of Technology

The first task is to strive for genuine understanding of the restructuring of modern societies through technology, so that we may be able to explain and intervene. The second is to seek clarity on how to witness so that one day technology can be driven with loving care.

—Ursula Franklin²⁹⁸

This chapter is an effort to articulate ethical and connective understandings and activations of technology. Technology is a pervasive construct that carries significant sensorial, conceptual, and practical impact on curatorial engagements and much beyond. Narratives of technology inform and direct public discussions from economics to ecology, politics to development, media to culture. Scrutinizing, exploring and developing epistemologies of technology may thus be viewed as vital aspects of a democratically committed curatorial practice.

I locate the cosmopolitical²⁹⁹ as an ethic, a weaving together of the relational experience of the cosmos or all that is, human and non-human, with an embodiment of politics as a way to

²⁹⁸ Ursula Franklin, “Quaker Witness in a Technological Age,” *The Ursula Franklin Reader*, 86.

Franklin’s essay focuses on how to bear witness as a Quaker, to live the values of pacifism, simplicity, and respect for the divine in everyone, in the context of today’s technological world (80).

²⁹⁹ My deeply felt understanding of cosmopolitics and its transformative capacity stems from experiencing and observing the power of love and connection in my life and in the world. Love as erotic courage, in which curiosity and attention, understanding and mystery, reverence and humility, of the most inclusive kind, opens up our mind, body, heart and spirit to being intimately transfigured and to inspire and instigate radical transfiguration. An example of a cosmopolitics rooted in radical commitment to love is Desmond Tutu’s inclusive and restorative activism-vision, which he articulates simply and with moving clarity in *God Has a Dream: A Vision of Hope for Our Time* (New York: Doubleday, 2005).

Cosmopolitics certainly also has a cross-disciplinary academic resonance. For example, philosopher Isabelle Stengers’ proposal of cosmopolitics centres on contextual activations of slowing down, involving a suspension of protective positions and external authority and listening to or facing

*live together well.*³⁰⁰ *A cosmopolitical epistemology of technology is thus one that is inclusive of more-than-human interests, agency, and relationships within a collaborative, politico-ecological pursuit of purpose, justice and connection. In my rethinking of technology, I focus on processes of experience and community as a constructive response to the reification of digital terrains.*

what we may not have been able to prior (994-995). She links this kind of process with an “etho-ecological perspective,” the transformative potential of the interplay of “being” (*ethos*) and “habitat” (*oikos*) as they connect up with each other in shifting moments or events (997). See Isabelle Stengers, “The Cosmopolitical Proposal,” in *Making Things Public: Atmospheres of Democracy*, eds. Bruno Latour and Peter Wiebel (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2005): 994-1003.

Scientist David Bohm’s articulation of completely open-ended dialogue, with no attachment to finding answers or being correct, to learn to work together out of something deeper, may also be seen as a rich exemplification of a cosmopolitical practice. See “Art, Dialogue, and the Implicate Order: David Bohm interviewed by Louwrien Wijers,” in David Bohm, *On Creativity*, 125-145. Where I share greater kinship with Bohm and differ in outlook from Stengers’ is that I consider concept-practices of harmony, honesty, etc., to be useful. Stenger sees them as foreclosing sufficient responsiveness to incompleteness of knowledges or the complexity of realities (1000). I reason that clarity is not a dismissal of complexity, honesty can both be incredibly intricate and humility-orienting, and notions of harmony can deepen ideas of personal and social inclusivity and responsibility, practices of responsiveness and transformation. Here I am in agreement with Jack Forbes and Fabiola Nabil Naguib that ideas articulated simply and clearly yet depthfully have a profound power to inspire and illuminate.

³⁰⁰ My worldview, experience and vision all inform my conception of politics as a way to live together well—the development and enactment of respectful, creative, and ethical relations. Resonance of such an understanding of politics can be found in diverse articulations, from Patricia Monture’s dreaming of Indigenous independence to Bruno Latour’s call for democratization of the sciences. See Patricia Monture-Angus, *Journeying Forward: Dreaming First Nations’ Independence* (Halifax: Fernwood Publishing, 1999) and Bruce Latour, *The Politics of Nature: Bringing Sciences into Democracy*, trans. Catherine Porter (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 2004). Patricia Monture expresses mutuality as the honoring of difference and independence in the service of co-existence via the wisdom and epistemology of the “gus-wen-qah” or “Two-Row Wampum” (36). Latour’s vision rests in developing a messy yet robust conception of parliamentary practices, inclusive of human and non-human, in the service of building a “good common world” (239).

6.1 Notes on Technology and Transformative Curatorial Practice

Practical action, socio-epistemic tasks, and contextual environments are thoroughly enmeshed, with technology being a way of naming this holistic web of action and direction, vision and realization. For example, “technology is,” for medicine man and thinker Malidoma Patrice Somé, rooted in the worldview of the Dagara in Burkina Faso, “what keeps the individuals and the relationship between individuals and nature healthy.”³⁰¹ He elaborates technology as the way “matter and Spirit interact,” assisting “to fulfill basic human needs, such as community, health, harmony, and a sense of meaning and purpose in life.”³⁰² Somé’s articulation of technology exemplifies how concept-practices of technology gather meaning in the context of politico-cosmic understandings and arrangements. Scientist and activist Ursula Franklin characterizes technology as “an agent of social restructuring,”³⁰³ “something that is both fish and water, means as well as end.”³⁰⁴ She incisively locates technology as “the sum total of what people do,”³⁰⁵ which “includes ideas and practices...myths and various models of reality.”³⁰⁶ I appreciate Somé’s and Franklin’s conceptualizations because they frame technology in relation to understandings of reality and organization of social relations and priorities. In the sections to follow, I will be mapping what I view as life-affirming technological outlooks rooted in the vision of a shared good life. A shared good life implies a just technological web for

³⁰¹ See Malidoma Patrice Somé, “Indigenous Technologies,” in *The Healing Wisdom of Africa*, 59-60.

³⁰² Ibid. , 61 and 71.

³⁰³ Franklin, “Quaker Witness in a Technological Society,” *Ursula Franklin Reader*, 82.

³⁰⁴ Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*, 6.

³⁰⁵ Ibid. , 125.

³⁰⁶ Ibid. , 2.

peoples and the earth, concerned with nurturing and restoring rather than “overpower[ing] and displace[ing] other types of social logic [logic other than production] such as the logic of compassion or the logic of obligation, the logic of ecological survival or the logic of linkages into nature.”³⁰⁷ Later in this chapter, I will be grounding these re/orientations of technology through reference to the work of *Unnayan Bikalper Nitinirdharoni Gobeshona* (UBINIG) or Policy Research for Development Alternative in Bangladesh.

How does this re/orienting of technology intersect with the curatorial field? Curators, in their training, experience and practice, whether in an academic, institutional or other social contexts, are likely to encounter and engage with philosophies or critiques of technology. One reason for this exposure is the social ubiquity of technology, the impact of technology on art, archiving and artworlds, and the ongoing interactions among them. In professionalized framing, thinking, and engaging around intersections of technology, media, and curation, a constrained or partial view of technology—its industrial or informatic vision—remains at the forefront. To illustrate the implications of this dominant way of framing technology as well as developing a contrasting vision, I turn to a discussion of *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond: Curatorial Models for Digital Art*. This edited anthology includes some of the most prominent curators and writers on new media, including its editor, Christiane Paul, an adjunct curator at the Whitney Museum of American Art. In the introduction to the anthology, Paul speaks to how “so-called new media art...challenges the traditional art world—its customary methods of preservation and documentation, as well as its approach to collection and preservation.”³⁰⁸ She

³⁰⁷ Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*, 92.

³⁰⁸ Christiane Paul, “Introduction,” in Christiane Paul, ed., *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond: Curatorial Models for Digital Art* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2008): 1. Mainstream ideas

further states that technologies in the digital and information domain are and will continue to transform the “role of ‘art spaces’ in the broadest sense,” including making “the curator, artist, audience, and institution” collaborate and interact in new ways.³⁰⁹ Paul highlights the need to engage technological and media history, aside from an art historical knowledge base, concluding, “new media art requires media literacy.”³¹⁰ She also underscores the intensification via new media art of a dynamic already underway in art in the twentieth century from “object to process and system,” along with the enabling of experimental, more self-determined cultural spaces.³¹¹

Paul’s narrative seems to involve a priori assumptions around materiality and media, evident in her unquestioning invocation of “objects of art” as a way of encapsulating artistic practice prior to avant-garde movements in the 20th century and the emergence of new media art.³¹² In other words, the art historical narrative that there was a universal, fundamental ontology of art, that individuals or communities did not view process or ideas as integral to their creativity, that they did not conceive of creativity and materiality beyond the notion of an object or flowing across space-time prior to western or modern avant-gardism is an untenable idea. As I argued in

of technology enter the curatorial milieu via their manifestation as new ways of thinking about and making art – so-called new media – heavily indebted to industrial, informatic, and other technological advances across fields. Along with working for the Whitney Museum of American Art, Christiane Paul is also the director of a digital arts organization, Intelligent Agent, author of *Digital Art* in the influential Thames and Hudson series on art, and a professor in the School of Media Studies at The New School. I have chosen Christiane Paul’s anthology as an entrypoint for a discussion on curation and technology as she is an instrumental figure in the advocacy for and the framing of digital art within high art world institutions and art historical and technological discourse.

³⁰⁹ Ibid. , 2.

³¹⁰ Ibid. , 5.

³¹¹ Ibid. , 6 and 7.

³¹² Ibid. , 1. Also see Christiane Paul, “Challenges for a Ubiquitous Museum: From the White Cube to the Black Box and Beyond,” in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*, 74.

the previous chapter, assuming pre-participatory objecthood of art or this objecthood as presumptively being its defining attribute does not hold for individual creative practice, in any context.³¹³ In the same chapter, I specifically undertook a brief discussion of Mayumi Oda's work to highlight how painting can be an embodiment of various kinds of relations and practices and need not be seen as a *given* kind of object or media of art. Yet a priori conceptions of media continue to be influential within (and outside of) the artworld-academia post/industrial complex, shaping the way the nature and importance of new media art is discussed in key arenas.

Several contributors in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond* draw parallels between “immateriality” in conceptual art in which art is no longer exclusively considered an object with new media art that may not only be seen as immaterial in the conceptual sense but also reside in or make use of a new kind of “non-physical” or “virtual” space. For instance, educator, artist, activist, and curator, Patrick Lichty claims that “the challenge of new media art’s lack of ‘materiality’ resembles the challenge of earlier avant-garde art (works such as Duchamp’s *Fountain*) and the dematerialization of the object in conceptual art....”³¹⁴ These conceptions of “immateriality,” whether in relation to conceptualism or new media art, are rooted in reductionist and/or pre-participatory notions of physicality. Ideas or concepts, for example, are *biophysical* events and woven into a rich repertoire of cognitive-social enactments. Cognition is not to be collapsed with intellectuality and ideas and concepts are material modes of relationship that need

³¹³ I am highlighting a kind of presumptive thinking around “objects ” or alternately “ideas” being immaterial that shapes many art historical and cultural theoretical narratives. In my dissertation, I have provided constructive delineations that seek to redress pre-perceptive, pre-participatory ways of rendering the world whether in terms of art, concepts, or media.

³¹⁴ Patrick Lichty, “Reconfiguring Curation: Noninstitutional New Media Curating and the Politics of Cultural Production,” in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*, 166-167.

to be considered within ecologies of being and becoming. Reification and fetishization of ideas and concepts as art misrecognizes the nature of both cognition and art — they are modes of socio-ecological³¹⁵ participation, *not* representation. In other words, it is not the physicalist objecthood of art that makes it meaningfully material, but its participatory forging of experience and creativity. In a related critical vein, there is a vast *physical* infrastructure needed, for instance, for the internet to operate and the transmission and manipulation of data as code, no matter how instantaneously achieved, relies upon the *materiality* of information which in turn is only sensible to us because of *embodied* experience and capability. In contrast to the discourse of “immateriality,” I have delineated archiving, artistic or other, within ecologies of experiential aliveness, in the entanglement of materiality with experience and embodiment, community and value.

Curator and educator Joasia Krysa, following the Italian Autonomists, a Marxist school of thought, deploys an understanding of immateriality as the move from industrial modes of labor and production to networked labor within systems of information and communication in which affect, culture, and knowledge are seen to carry new kinds of significance.³¹⁶ Her discussion of immateriality is more multifaceted than some in that she makes connections between “immateriality” and shifts in modes of capitalism. At the same time, the material impact and implications of the capitalist bases of information and communication technologies on human lives in varied positions of power and access, locale and labor, are absent in Krysa’s

³¹⁵ I deploy the term socio-ecological not only to indicate the sociality of human life within ecologies but to indicate that sociality extends to plants, minerals, all other beings – they live and share in community.

³¹⁶ Joasia Krysa, “Distributed Curating and Immateriality,” in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*, 90.

narrative.³¹⁷ Krysa, however, does acknowledge both the dynamic of social control and the potential of positive collectivization.³¹⁸ Nonetheless, her understanding of “immateriality” remains connected to information and communication based technological shifts versus the broader ecological and cosmopolitical understanding of materiality I develop via discussions around archiving in previous chapters and expand further in relation to technology here.³¹⁹ A succinct way of highlighting this distinction is to contrast the fetishization of the immersive capitalist, technological, globalized world to re/membering that the primary immersive environment is the earth, that it is the earth that has tended the human mind.³²⁰ Further,

³¹⁷ A thoughtful exploration of the “object interrelations between bodies and technologies” is present in the writings of interdisciplinary thinker and artist Coco Fusco (191). See Coco Fusco, “At Your Service: Latin Women in the Global Information Network,” *The Bodies That Were Not Ours and Other Writings* (London: Routledge, 2001): 186-201. In this article, Fusco powerfully challenges the emancipatory rhetoric of the digital revolution through reference to women’s lives and working conditions in the *maquiladoras* (assembly plants) in free trade zones in Mexico where much electronic equipment is manufactured.

³¹⁸ Krysa, 88.

³¹⁹ The Italian lineage of Marxist thought that shapes Krysa’s articulations of immateriality is exemplified in Antonio Negri and Michael Hardt, *Empire*. I agree with Negri and Hardt that “the informatization of production” marks a profound socio-economic shift and the impact of this shift needs critical and creative attention (280). Where I strongly differ from Negri and Hardt is on their understandings of materiality – I view materiality as a dynamic process, with affect, psyche or relationships not being outside of materiality but integral aspects of its participatory, pulsating constitution. In contrast, Negri and Hardt contend that “production of services results in no material and durable good” and hence they view it as involving “*immaterial labor*—that is, labor that produces an immaterial good, such as a service, a cultural product, knowledge, or communication” (290). I view knowledge and communication as material forms of relationship, as participatory modes of archiving, not “immaterial” or “non-durable.”

³²⁰ For a rich discussion of how the “core of the mind is the ecological unconscious,” (320) that re/membering the integral relationships between psychology and ecology are crucial to regaining our individual and collective sanity, see Theodore Roszak, *The Voice of the Earth*. In relation to the Paul anthology, Sarah Cook states that any art that is process oriented and audience involving for its completion would benefit from new/alternative curatorial models, calling this shift one of “‘art after new media,’ where all art is relational, interconnected, mediated by communication systems, and global” (44).

immersive environments are navigable thanks to our bodies and their abilities to be permeable to experience, sensorily grounding the dynamism of relationships that enact consciousness.

There is also a strong narrative of resistance tied to new media art in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*. For example, Christiane Paul concludes, “the intrinsic features of new media art ultimately protect it from being co-opted by the art establishment.”³²¹ Curator and writer Steve Dietz provides examples of curatorial projects that bypass museological or institutional mediation and operate on a self-organized bases on the net.³²² In part, he credits this ability to virtuality, which he defines as “non-physicality” or immateriality.³²³ However, capital

See “Immateriality and its Discontents: An Overview of Main Models and Issues for Curating New Media” in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*, 26-49. Cook is thinking of interconnection and communication in terms of global media and post/industrial technology. My notion of interconnection and communication sees this globalist purview as existing within an experiential, relational planetary and cosmic context that holds for art/life before and/or after new media.

³²¹ Christiane Paul, “Challenges for a Ubiquitous Museum: From the White Cube to the Black Box and Beyond,” in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*, 74. Christiane Paul’s anthology is useful to contrast with *MediaArtHistories*, ed. Oliver Grau (Cambridge: MIT Press, 2007). What I especially appreciate in the Grau anthology is a nuanced exploration of interactivity, including its rich histories prior to so-called new media, and its rooting in cultural experience at large, in several of the essays. I share this broader outlook on media and sensory-cultural nexuses but there are also ways in which I inflect my understanding differently. These aspects include my strong focus on ethics within a connective ecology as well as my locating of technology within the profundity of what it means to cultivate good relations. I also carry a non-humancentric outlook and do not take art history or media studies to necessarily be primary entrypoints. For example, I explore how the work of farmers in Bangladesh can assist in developing an ethically and socially more meaningful framework for imagining and assessing technologies.

³²² Steve Dietz, “Curating Net Art: A Field Guide,” in *New Media in the White Cube*, 78-79.

³²³ Ibid. , 77. For a thoughtful consideration of the question of internet art and political resistance, as well as the interface of art institutions and new/media art, see Julian Stallabrass, *Internet Art: The Online Clash of Culture and Commerce* (London: Tate Publishing, 2003). I appreciate that Stallabrass does not see resistance as *inherent* to the internet and asks many searching questions and grounds his positions in modest claims. Where my approach is different, not opposed, is that I focus on the question of politics as an integrative, experiential domain, and explore technology within value and in an ecological framework.

and status quo deeply shape the landscape of new technologies, even if these technologies circumvent the art establishment. In addition, working outside of an institutional context does not necessarily imply that one's values, outlooks, sensibilities have not been influenced or impacted by the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. Further, even oppositional or resistant art or curation can be deeply marked by what it opposes—external political awareness is not sufficient. There is thus a need for erotic courage and intelligence to be furthered. I have highlighted the erotic as publically and professionally relevant by developing an integrative, ethical, and embodied framing of archiving.

My holistic re/imagining of archiving does not preclude me from understanding and appreciating how advances in telematics,³²⁴ from email to the internet, as well as other forms of technology, have opened up distinct terrains of collaboration, communication, and interaction. Thinkers in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond* explore how new media brings curatorial, artistic, audience and institutional challenges and opportunities. They highlight continuities and discontinuities with previous modes of thought and practice in artistic and museological domains with the emergence of new media, and delineate how in the interaction between new media art and the artworld there is both domestication (quite underemphasized as this is in the anthology) and meaningful upheaval. The issue that is backgrounded in this anthology and needs further integration in the artworld theoretically and practically is that collaboration and interaction matter for an ethical and democratic curatorial practice, irrespective of the question of so-called new media.³²⁵ My aim is to develop conceptions of media and technology that do not allow

³²⁴ Telematics refers to how telecommunications and informatics combine together.

³²⁵ Sara Diamond is the only contributor within Paul's anthology that I see as grounding the collaborative opportunities of new media within a broader social ecology. See "Participation, Flow, and the

questions of community and democracy, ethics and relationship to be separated from the very understandings of media and technology or dislocated from their purposive and ecological contexts. Such rethinking of media and technology provide another integral entry point for deepening curatorial self-reflection *and* public scrutiny of curatorial practice. My aim in developing a connective conception of media and technology is also to further enable constitutional and epistemic opening up not only of art institutions but the generative complex that accompanies them, ranging from technological education and practice to disciplinary and public narratives of the intersections of creativity, community and technology.

Locating and examining media and technology within an epistemically just, holistic ecology of human and more-than-human relations and purpose furthers the case for ethicality in

Redistribution of Authorship: The Challenges of Collaborative Exchange and New Media Curatorial Practice” in *New Media in the White Cube and Beyond*, 135-162. The section on “Collaborative Community Practice: The Aboriginal Contribution” is, in my opinion, the most effective section in Diamond’s essay (149-152). This section provides thoughtful context regarding technology and its framing and location with/in community and the task of collective flourishing through incorporation of Aboriginal articulations. However, the ethico-epistemic implications of these articulations are not sufficiently integrated into the rest of the chapter.

It is interesting how the narratives of collaboration in relation to new media in Paul’s anthology, in their historicizations pertaining to art, circumvent legacies and practices of community-based art. An example of this kind of art is Judy F. Baca’s practice involving community collaboration in art-making and civic space. Baca co-founded The Social and Public Art Resource Center (SPARC) with Christina Schlesinger and Donna Deitch in 1976, whose “artistic direction was formulated with the concept that the arts could be engaged with the most important issues of our time and that ordinary people/community members could be participants in the arts.” The citation is from the PDF detailing SPARC’s accomplishments, downloadable from the “About Us” page at < www.sparcmurals.org >.

In collaborating with community in creating “sites of public memory,” SPARC deploys both old and new technologies (as dominantly understood). I believe if commitment to extensive community involvement, to democratizing public space and the arts, is present, these commitments can be enacted curatorially, socially, and institutionally. One does not need new media to instigate democratization though one can certainly look at how it may be enabled in new or powerful ways in specific regards.

curatorial practice. By purpose, I am referring to collaborative human and more-than-human gathering of meaningful direction and action—to the basic but crucial reflection that all the electronic signals and codes would not amount to anything if our bodily/embodied sensing, relating, and acting were discounted. As ecologist and philosopher David Abram incisively expresses, it is at the level of “sensuous, bodily experience [that] we find ourselves in an expressive, gesturing landscape, in a world that *speaks*.”³²⁶ There is a strong tendency to forget, for example, how email as media is contained within the media of language, which is located within the media of community, which is located in the media of the earth. These interrelationships, the interaction among them, need ethical and social attention and illumination, to assist in integratively evaluating the digital versus fragmenting its operations in relation to non-silicon ecologies.

Digitality may extend into the various ways we *already* participate in the making and inhabiting of realities—in Ursula Franklin’s resonant mapping, this includes “vernacular reality” (“direct action and immediate experience”),³²⁷ “extended reality” (“body of knowledge and emotions we acquire that is based on the experiences of others”),³²⁸ “constructed or reconstructed reality” (delineations and interpretations that make common culture),³²⁹ and “projected reality” (“the vernacular reality of the future.”)³³⁰ Nevertheless, there is no *autonomous* digital

³²⁶ Abram, *The Spell of the Sensuous: Perception and Language in a More-than-Human World* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1996): 81. Abram is strongly influenced by phenomenology, a branch of philosophy that focuses on direct, felt experience. A different yet related focus on the body and senses via the tradition of process philosophy is found in the work of Brian Massumi. See *Parables of the Virtual*.

³²⁷ *The Real World of Technology*, 28.

³²⁸ *Ibid.*

³²⁹ Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*, 28-29.

³³⁰ *Ibid.*

experience of realities. For instance, expressed another way, words and sounds, language and music are *not* digital, though they may be transfigured into information or code via digital technologies. They rather exist in relation to our capabilities to work with the potential of our minds, bodies, spirits, and hearts to co-creatively develop and shape environmentally specific consciousness—this environment is biological, physical, social, cosmic, technological. They are modes of how we learn to meaningfully access and be at home in the body and world—it is our capacity to sense and feel, to perceive and act in community that allows communicative utterances to come into materialization, for those to be articulated and heard, to be understood and interpreted.

Digital realities are synthesized realities involving human imagination and perception. They emerge out of socio-economic and techno-scientific outlooks and contexts we live within and require extensive human labor, physical infrastructures as well as environmental resources. Additionally, materiality of realities is a dynamic, embodied psychic and socio-political relational process versus a matter of purely autonomous, external physicality. Misrecognition or reductionism around materiality contributes to the evacuation of both political ecology and the body from technological understandings. I agree with Coco Fusco that the digital needs to be considered in relation to “the body and the social,” underscoring that “in the same way that concentrating solely on what we see on the screen suppresses the status of the computer as a manufactured object, formalist fixation of the net we use as consumers or make a living off as designers obfuscates the political and economic realities out of which digital media and telecommunications emerge.”³³¹ Critics like Fusco as well as Sean Cubitt have articulated the

³³¹ Fusco, “At Your Service,” 191.

need to ground discussions of new technologies within socio-political histories and better awareness of brutal realities of capitalism.³³² Scholar Carol Gigliotti has made a similar call, providing heartening consideration of the impact of new technologies on animal lives and communities.³³³ In making questions of meaning and purpose integral aspects of technological outlooks and practices, I stand in full alignment with investigating the social, economic, political and environmental imbrications of technological worlds. A cosmopolitical understanding of technology is useful in further clarifying that as much as we may incisively perform an economic or political critique of technology, *without* value there is no technology. In other words, technology is not something external to social relations and directions, visions and realizations. Such an understanding yokes politics and technology together, rather than seeing a discussion and inhabitation of politics—how to live well together—as an optional avenue of technological consideration.

Métis architect Douglas Cardinal’s outlook on technology in *The Native Creative Process* is resonantly instructive here. Cardinal connects to the potential of the information age but he grounds this within a broader technological milieu of love, responsibility, and sacredness of all life.³³⁴ And he names the open, responsive movements between the sacred whole and the dynamism of becoming as creative process.³³⁵ Significantly, Cardinal emphasizes that “the best

³³² See Sean Cubbitt, “Art, Technology, and Policy in the 21st Century,” *Third Text* 23.5 (2009): 571-578. Cubitt also highlights that “digital technologies are more, not less, polluting and energy-hungry than predecessor media like film and print” (578).

³³³ See Carol Gigliotti, ed., *Leonardo’s Choice: Genetic Technologies and Animals* (New York: Springer, 2009).

³³⁴ See *Native Creative Process*. For examples of Douglas’s reflections on responsibility, see p. 20 and 92, on love, see p. 105, on information society technology, see p. 25 and 28.

³³⁵ *Ibid.*, see especially p. 64, 92, and 105.

natural resource is the individual being,” something he contends is strongly present in Indigenous epistemologies, but needs to be integrated in the information age more broadly to shift it towards genuine creativity and harmony.³³⁶ The separation of technology from embodied experience—the holistic, relational responsiveness of individual being—in fact works to reify technology, along with many other factors. Value and embodied experience are constitutive aspects of technology, and curatorial technological education, knowledges and practices need to integrate these insights into their workings. Implications include taking cognizance of the role of sensory and emotional awareness, ethical and moral imagination in both connectively and cosmopolitically understanding and activating technology.

Curatorial ability to fully engage questions of media and technology *requires* sensory, ethical and emotional cultivation. This assertion is quite different in orientation than the contention, for example, of art historian Caroline A. Jones who asserts that synaesthesia and kinesthesia as forms of experience are far more consciously acceptable in the artworld today, marking a profound shift from the monosensory, modernist demands of art critics like Clement Greenberg.³³⁷ She contends that the sensorium as bodily experienced today is more important to think with than ever before as the body and “its visceral surroundings are studded with earphones, zooming in psychopharmaceuticals, extended with prostheses, dazzled by odorless tastes and tasteless odors, transported by new media, and buzzing with ideas.”³³⁸ My position is that acknowledging our hybridized technological selves is not sufficient for depthful grounding

³³⁶ Cardinal, *Native Creative Process*, 25.

³³⁷ See Caroline A. Jones, “Introduction” as well as “The Mediated Sensorium” in *Sensorium: Embodied Experience, Technology, and Contemporary Art*, ed. Caroline A. Jones (Cambridge: The MIT Press, 2006): 1-4 and 5-49. See especially p. 2 and p. 18.

³³⁸ Jones, “Introduction,” 2.

and vision: what helps cultivate synaesthesia and kinesthesia into self-knowledge and public knowledge, into ethical action and good relations? Seeing how technology, value, and embodiment are interwoven is crucial, with care given to not collapse technology with its industrial and informatic imaginations. Within the artworld-academia post/industrial complex and far beyond, there needs to be cultivation of processes of technological learning in which the body and emotions are given conscious attention, so that there is nourishment of multifaceted ways of navigating the socio-epistemic flows between ethics and sense-ability. These flows have *always* been important, as they are the grounds of experience and relationship. I do not dismiss the need to understand the implications of new media and technology in how we perceive and experience the world, what they mean to our cognition, bodies, hearts, and spirits. At the same time, the ethical and social awareness needed regarding new media and technology involves aesthetic, sensory and creative cultivation, residing within a wide-network of value-based, community driven, earth connective immersive experiences, knowledges and actions, not in reified or parochial conceptions of either edgy art or technology.

6.2 Unnayan Bikalper Nitinirdharoni Gobeshona (UBINIG) (Policy Research for Development Alternative)

My interest in UBINIG is curatorial. A curatorial way of engaging matters of public policy and development could be seen as inquiring whether imaginations and practices of public policy and collective direction nourish creative-ethical relations. UBINIG is a particularly resonant site for such curatorial re/membering as they share in a conception of culture as an integrative mode of imagination and relationship, value and practice. They locate culture as the “gateway to the ethical world,” as involving “critical encounter with dominant ideas of

development, science and technology, linear conception of history and the purpose of life as material accumulation represented in money form.”³³⁹ UBINIG is a concrete and powerful example for illuminating the interrelationship of creative nurturance in a society-wide context with responsive public policies. What further curatorially interests me regarding UBINIG is their sustained commitment to engaging the creative and critical potential of eco-ethical saintly traditions of Bangladesh, often musical and poetic in form, as vital sources of democratic and public reason.³⁴⁰

To locate curation within a societal framework of creative nurturance and ethical relations that extends beyond professional claiming is a way of enriching the field of curation, not making it devoid of specificity. Specificity is something to be enacted, not something to be gathered via policing or tautological defining (curation is what curators do). Crucial questions pertaining to various forms of together-doing, including questions of technology, open up by locating curation in a cosmopolitical ecology versus centrically rooting it in the artworld academia post/industrial complex.³⁴¹

The parochializing and fragmentation of curation’s imagination and historicization within reproductive processes of primarily the artworld academia post/industrial complex contributes to foreclosing opportunities for professional curatorial learning from sites like UBINIG. It also hinders the ability to consciously appreciate and support curation in its wholeness, as a co-creative individual, community, and planetary dynamic.

³³⁹ See *UBINIG: Policy Research and Development Alternative* (Dhaka: UBINIG, nd): 17.

³⁴⁰ Ibid. Also see *Nayakrishi Andolon: Cultivating Ananda Planting the Seed of Joy* (Dhaka: UBINIG, n.d.): 44-45.

³⁴¹ For example, I seriously consider my teaching as a form of curatorial practice. This consideration is not out of cleverness or conceptualism. It arises from feeling a genuine sense of responsibility towards the dignity, creativity, and gifts of each person in the classroom, irrespective of political, artistic, or social leanings. I have also taught artists for several years. Supporting them in *their* particular journeys in a dialogic, non-judgmental atmosphere in which there is growth-promoting creative, epistemic, personal and social challenge as well as inspiration has been important to me.

I first connected with Farida Akhter and Farhad Mazhar, directors and co-founders of UBINIG, in relation to the activities of Creativity Commons Collective and Press.³⁴² I kept in touch with Akhter and Mazhar, meeting them initially in Canada, followed by a visit to UBINIG's office in Dhaka and two of their *Biddaghors* (Learning Places) in Kushtia and Ishwardi in January 2008. I had the opportunity and privilege to meet many people involved with UBINIG—farmers, seedsavers, office staff, administrators, musicians, youth, and other individuals and families connected with the spiritual, creative, and agricultural aspects of UBINIG's work. My understanding of UBINIG and its multifaceted activities are thus informed by personal exchanges with Akhter and Mazhar and other activists, community members, and staff working at various locations in Bangladesh. These exchanges in the field also included participation in a seminar, individual and community exchange organized by UBINIG as well as a Creativity Commons book launch at their feminist bookstore followed by a spirited dialogue with those gathered. I also visited with farmers shifting from tobacco to multi-crop sustenance based agriculture, observed and participated in activities at the learning centres which house seed banks, hold musical and poetry gatherings, and have residential staff and local peoples working in many capacities on the land. Witnessing and engaging with UBINIG's work which intersects with long-standing legacies of localized socio-ecological practices and ethico-spiritual creative traditions,³⁴³ along with reading their extensive published primary materials and related critical

³⁴² Fabiola Nabil Naguib and I co-founded Creativity Commons Collective in 2003 with the addition of the press in 2007. See www.creativitycommons.org.

³⁴³ For example, the UBINIG learning centre at Kushtia I visited is connected to the shrine of Lalon Shah, who continues to be a major cultural figure in Bangladesh. Shah (1774-1890) is part of the Bengali Baul tradition. The Baul mystical tradition evolved in interaction with many spiritual and religious traditions alive within South Asia, and is rooted in vernacular poetry and music and deeply humanist and ethical in

literature on issues pertaining to development, environment, food security, reproductive technologies, genetic engineering, mid-wifery, handloom industries, and many others, informs my mapping that follows.³⁴⁴

outlook. UBINIG roots its critique of globalization and support of community-focused agri-culture and other initiatives within this tradition. This is UBINIG's response to counteracting the dominance of urban elite culture or imposition of outside models – they consciously work with the critical and creative capacities of rural Bengali philosophical and creative traditions as they provide vibrant foundations for struggles for justice and respect for the earth. UBINIG's interface with/in Bengali culture is organizationally articulated as *Nabapran Andolan*, “a platform to do research in oral cultures, local knowledge and discourses on social wisdom expressed in music, poetry, festivals, theatres, congregations and other informal forms” (16). Now *Nayakrishi Andolon* (The New Agricultural Movement) of UBINIG is closely allied to *Nabapran Andolan*, as both are rooted in villages and local communities, and are ethically and socially interlinked. Many of the farmers, fisherfolk, etc., are also singers and poets. See *UBINIG*, 16-18.

³⁴⁴ The literature includes *UBINIG: Policy Research and Development Alternative*, Palash Baral and Rajeev Khedkar, eds., *Food Security in South Asia: Enhancing Community Capacity to Generate Knowledge and Influence Policy* (Dhaka: UBINIG, 2002), Farida Akhter, *Amar Dai Ma Dai Ma Go... Oh My Dear Midwife* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2002), UBINIG, *Spinning in the Women's Way: Challenging World Trade* (Narigrantha Prabantana: 2004), UBINIG, *Nayakrishi Andolon: Cultivating Ananda Planting the Seed of Joy*, Narigrantha Prabantana and Nayakrishi Andolon, *Health is Ecology, Life is Biodiversity: Reclaim Women's Knowledge in Health, Reproduction, and Medicine, National Dai Conference 2006 Report* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2007), UBINIG and Narigrantha Prabantana, *Women's Declarations on Reproductive Technologies and Genetic Engineering* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2004), Narigrantha Prabantana, *Women's Day on Food, 15 November, 1996, at NGO Forum during World Food Summit, 13-17 November, 1996, Rome, Italy* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2004), Farida Akhter, *False Linkage of Food and Population: The Man-Made Scare for Corporate Solutions* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2005), *Uncultivated Food: The Missing Link in Livelihood and Poverty Programmes*, SANFEC Policy Brief#1, November 2004, Farida Akhter, *Women and Trees: Trees in the Life of Women in Kaijuri Village* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 1999), SANFEC, *South Asian Statement of Concern on Food, Ecology, and Culture* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2001), Farida Akhter, *Seeds of Movements: On Women's Issues in Bangladesh* (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2007), and Farida Akhter, *Depopulating Bangladesh: Essays on the Politics of Fertility*, 3rd ed. (Dhaka: Narigrantha Prabantana, 2005).

I have developed the following map for the reader to explicate UBINIG’s work in relation to a rethinking of technology. More specifically, this mapping is a way of contrasting hegemonic outlooks on technology and its correlations with social thought, relations, and structures to that of a concrete counter example.

Table 1 Mapping a Different Techno(eco)logical Worldview

<i>Techno-generative Purview</i>	<i>Dominant-Capitalist Ideologies</i>	<i>UBINIG Re/orientation</i>
Society	Reductionism/Market Relations Nature as Passive and as Resource People as Problem ³⁴⁵	Living Practice/ ‘Truly Social’ Relations Honor Sanctity and Meaning of Every Entity ‘Human Spirit of Freedom’ ³⁴⁶
Structure	Resource-Industry-Production-Profit	Ecology-Ethics-Life-Community
Means ³⁴⁷	Standardization, Isolation and Fragmentation Separation of Knowledge and Experience Objectification and Commodification	Diversity, Interconnection & Oneness Community Participation & ‘Becoming Community’ Reciprocal Responsibility and Care ³⁴⁸

³⁴⁵ For a detailing of an anti-people technological outlook, see Shiva, *Staying Alive* and Franklin, *The Real World of Technology*.

³⁴⁶ See *UBINIG* 2, 4 and 3. Also see the publications *Nayakrishi Andolon* and *Food Security in South Asia*.

³⁴⁷ *Nayakrishi* critiques separation of means and ends: “...the result we seek can not [sic] be separated from the practice we initiate. Practice is not a means or instrument to achieve a goal, but a form of seeding that unfolds into the tree.” *Nayakrishi Andolon*, 8.

³⁴⁸ See *UBINIG*, 5 and 2.

Cont. Mapping a Different Techno(eco)logical Worldview

<i>Techno-generative Purview</i>	<i>Dominant-Capitalist Ideologies</i>	<i>UBINIG Re/orientation</i>
Ends	Organizing Natural & Social Realities Ownership of the true and real Material Accumulation	Nature as living (including human) social process Reality as experiential and participatory Just and ‘joyful living’ (‘ananda’) ³⁴⁹
Imagination	Cultural Capital and Commodity	Ecological-Ethical Visioning, Social Wisdom ³⁵⁰
History	Representation of the Past	Regenerative Present ³⁵¹
Agriculture	Global Sector of Food Production	Way of Life, Self-reliance
Health	Population Control Reproductive Technologies Pharmaceutical Testing and Dumping Service Provision Monetary Exchange	Local Governance of Social Relations Self-determination of women in context Preservation of biodiversity Intergenerational Knowledge Community Service

³⁴⁹ See *Nayakrishi Andolon*, 32

³⁵⁰ See “Nabapran Andolan,” *UBINIG*, 16-18.

³⁵¹ See Farida Akhter, *Seeds of Movement*, 13.

Cont. Mapping a Different Techno(eco)logical Worldview

<i>Techno-generative Purview</i>	<i>Dominant-Capitalist Ideologies</i>	<i>UBINIG Re/orientation</i>
Education	‘Formal’ and ‘Informal’ Education State and Developmental Agenda Separation of the mental from physical	‘Coping with real life situation,’ Community Capacity Local and Indigenous Knowledge Embodied learning, ‘continuous & cyclical process’ ³⁵²

NOTE : The mapping above is a heuristic device for clarifying different ethics of technological orientation. The idea-reality-practice of interconnection and the commons challenges dualistic borderings and imaginings so I caution the reader to not interpret the above mapping to be an endorsement of a binary paradigm.

³⁵² See “Education: Shikhi Pori Biddaloy,” *UBINIG*, 14-16.

Hegemonic practices of technology have so often been linked to and entrenched within the narrative and vision of dominant science and capital alone that questions of care, of community, of self-determination are not often correlated or discussed as vital technological matters. This blind-side obscures the technological histories and capacities of care, cooperation, and reciprocity that communities at large carry³⁵³—profound human and non-human technologies that co-constitute life on the planet. I deploy the example of UBINIG in the mapping above to underscore such a technological vision.

For instance, *Nayakrishi Andolon* or The New Agricultural Movement UBINIG is deeply involved in “is not simply about the production of ‘food’ but regeneration of communities with

³⁵³ Bekoff and Pierce in their book, *Wild Justice: The Moral Lives of Animals*, mention that Russian Anarchist Peter Kropotkin, a contemporary of Darwin, highlighted the evolutionary importance of cooperation in his book *Mutual Aid* in 1902 (57). Unfortunately, Kropotkin’s theory and observations were sidelined in favour of a “Darwinian lens of competition and an evolutionary arms race” (57). The evidence and views in evolutionary biology today support Kropotkin’s position. Bekoff and Pierce cite Martin Nowak, director of the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics at Harvard University: “Co-operation is the secret behind the open-endedness of the evolutionary process. Perhaps the most remarkable aspect of evolution is its ability to generate cooperation in a competitive world” (58-59). In other words, cooperation is a central technology for the flourishing of life and considered key to biological diversity.

For a thoughtful discussion of human connectivity to resources under a commons regime, locally managed institutions of governance that were until recently quite cooperative and worked more effectively as technologies of community resource management, see Prateep Kumar Nayak and Fikret Berkes, “Whose Marginalisation? Politics around Environmental Injustices in India’s Chilika Lagoon.” *Local Environment* 15.6 (2010): 553-567. Nayak & Berkes document the disconnection and displacement from both resources and local institutions for the customary fisherfolk in the Chilika Lagoon in Orissa due to out-migration caused by marginalizing social, political, and economic factors, whereby marginalization is “a process over time,” “not simply as a state of being” (553). The comment “not simply a state of being” is crucial, challenging “low income” or “poor” as pre-given categories—though fisherpeoples in Chilika Lagoon may be seen by others as poor or not having sufficient access to cash, until recently, they were able to successfully maintain their livelihoods (556).

conservation and enhancement of their wealth for healthy, happy, and enriched life,”³⁵⁴ confronting “existing relations that assert hierarchy, control, destruction, exploitation, disintegration, fragmentation or in other words unsustainable practices.”³⁵⁵ The legacies that support and constitute the movement include the evolving scientific and technological know-how of the farming communities—research “as a living practice”³⁵⁶—strengthened by active and activated saintly traditions, mutually interactive yet diverse religious and spiritual narratives that orient and sustain “ecological visions and strong ethical foundation [s] of social justice.”³⁵⁷ Three hundred thousand farming families participate in *Nayakrishi Andolon* successfully producing over twenty three hundred varieties of rice, forty varieties of chilis, etc., with decentralized community wealth (seed) preservation and exchange occurring in *Nayakrishi* households and

³⁵⁴ *UBINIG*, 10-11.

³⁵⁵ *Nayakrishi Andolon*, 8. Nayakrishi Andolon is defined as an “ecological movement” where the “emphasis is on biodiversity based life activities, developing an operational notion of ‘ecosystem’, ensuring various natural cycles of water, elements, nutrition, energy, evolution and demonstrating the validity and authenticity of experiential knowledge” (*UBINIG*, 10). Farida Akhter further contextualizes *Nayakrishi*:

Nayakrishi is not only an organic agricultural movement of farmers in Bangladesh, it is in the concrete sense is [sic] a farmers’ response to ‘globalization.’ The experiences of Nayakrishi can shed light not only on the complex connection between biodiversity and poverty, but can offer valuable insight to develop a biodiversity based rural strategy for ‘poverty-alleviation.’ The reordering of the agricultural production conditions and relations can also be seen as peasants’ initiative to reconstitute the community on new economic and ecological relations. In this sense, Nayakrishi Andolon is also a political strategy of farmers to deal with poverty in the context of the globalization of local economy, privatization of natural resources and structural incapacity of the Nation State in the era of trade liberalization (224-225).

“Defending the Integrity of Life and Diversity,” *Seeds of Movement*, 215-225.

³⁵⁶ *Food Security in South Asia*, 7.

³⁵⁷ *UBINIG*, 16.

villages.³⁵⁸ In many cases, the farmers, like the inspiring and spirited farmers I met while in Bangladesh, are working in co-operative partnership with the land to restore it, shifting from coercive tobacco cultivation for export to multicropping with a focus on familial and communal sustenance.³⁵⁹ *Nayakrishi Andolon* illustrates how self-determination may be strengthened through socio-ethical responsiveness to community-based legacies and practices, and the earth's generative creativity and power to re/awaken, sustain, and nourish life in all its diversity. Significantly, *Nayakrishi* connects the question of diversity to the development of capabilities of conscious experience and aware action:

Diversity is not merely the property of the observed. There could be no diversity unless faculties are consciously developed to distinguish diverse elements in their difference, unity, connections, and relations. While most of us as naturalists, conservationists or passionate ecologists would like to conserve and use biodiversity outside our own in nature, in the forest or in the landscapes, *Nayakrishi* does the opposite: it cultivates the faculties to experience, taste, and use the multiple manifestations between experience and actions.³⁶⁰

³⁵⁸ Two of these statistics (number of families involved and diverse kinds of rice grown) are from various sections on UBINIG's new website <www.ubinig.org>. I could not relocate the statistics regarding varieties of chili grown by *Nayakrishi* farmers. I had accessed this information from their old website that is no longer active. Based on following UBINIG's work via reports and articles on the web, it seems that the number of families involved and the genetic diversity of seeds being collected, shared, and grown has kept expanding.

The diversity of rice involves co-evolution i.e. extensive human-plant interactions. In other words, rice is part of community and conscious and ethical relationships with rice plants constitute an integral aspect of the dynamic phenomenon that is biodiversity. For a discussion of rice culture with a specific focus on women, see Akther, "Women Rice, and Livelihood in Bangladesh," *Seeds of Movement*, 189-207.

³⁵⁹ For example, the farmers I met explained the process by which the tobacco companies severely exploited and coerced them, attempting to keep them in monocrop tobacco cultivation even though their families may starve.

³⁶⁰ *Nayakrishi Andolon*, 10.

Nayakrishi as well as other social streams UBINIG participates within have a strong focus on “the appropriation and regeneration of the life activities of the communities, the joy of living creatively.”³⁶¹ These activities are modes of interfacing the sensory self and the world within the context of meeting individual and collective needs and aspirations, living a good, healthy, and joyful life, and building a more socio-ecologically connected community.³⁶² They constitute a techno-epistemic web that is highly supportive of self-sufficiency, acting as a response to coercive maldevelopment powered by “corporate ‘science’ and tools of death touted as hi-tech.”³⁶³ 40% of all food consumed in areas where local biodiversity has been maintained is uncultivated³⁶⁴ and for the poorest of families this is close to 100%,³⁶⁵ allowing non-monetized access to highly nutritious food. 70% of all cloth produced in Bangladesh is through handlooms and is closely linked to agriculture, protection of trees, and rural employment.³⁶⁶ Midwives, involved in over 75% of rural women’s lives, rely on biodiversity for medicine and provide local, largely non-monetized access to health care and intergenerational passing on of medical and scientific knowledge.³⁶⁷ Where the knowledge and ecological base has been strongly maintained, the mortality rates for both child and mother are incredibly low.³⁶⁸ Within these interconnected people-centred technological webs, the process of creating or contributing remain

³⁶¹ *Nayakrishi Andolan*, 32.

³⁶² *Ibid.* , 3-10, 30-33

³⁶³ *Ibid.* , 5.

³⁶⁴ Uncultivated foods are not wild foods in the sense that conscious socioecological interactions with them are crucial aspects of human relationships to these plants. See Akther, “Women Manage Plants for Food and Health,” esp. p. 182-187.

³⁶⁵ *Uncultivated Food*, 9-10.

³⁶⁶ *Spinning in the Women’s Way*, 12 as well as Akther, *Women and Trees*, esp. p. 13-15.

³⁶⁷ *Amar Dai Ma Dai Ma Go*, 20.

³⁶⁸ *Ibid.* , 12-13.



Figure 2 *Community Seed Wealth Centre, Ishwardi, Bangladesh, 2008. Photograph by Fabiola Nabil Naguib.*

embedded within local community's capacities, social relations, and aspirations of ecologically sound health and happiness. UBINIG works to integratively support and strengthen a web of "appropriate technologies that are error friendly and contribute to preserving biological, cultural, and social diversity of all living beings" while being conducive to "collective decision-making and democratic participation and control."³⁶⁹ UBINIG's example illuminates that technological orientations and developments are considerably enriched by being connected to experiential and community epistemologies and being collectively and responsively determined.

Curators, depending on their context of practice, need to carry awareness regarding telematic shaping of social relations today to be able to grasp many kinds of contemporary art or to meaningfully engage and frame culture/science. In the context of their work, integrative understanding and assessment of technologies requires cognizance of the immersive bases of experience. In other words, curatorial understanding and assessment of technologies is incomplete without interrelational consideration of body, community, value, and the earth.

The reification of art, the separation of aesthetics from life, of culture from senses and the earth, all contribute to the evacuation of the richness and passion of meaning and purpose, justice and connection in the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. The reification of technology from its transformative and living human and earth bases implicates and reflects this dissociative dynamic. My engagement with technological re/orientation by social movements like UBINIG is in the service of illustrating that the interfaces of the socio-natural and politico-ecological world and human embodiment are a fertile curatorial source of techno-ethics.

³⁶⁹ This quote is taken from the Comilla Declaration of 1989, arising from a conference on reproductive technologies and genetic engineering that was hosted by UBINIG in partnership with the Feminist International Network of Resistance to Reproductive and Genetic Engineering (FINRRAGE). See *Women's Declarations*, 18. Although the reflections on technology arise out of this specific context in the publication, they reflect UBINIG's broader outlook regarding technology, ethics and social empowerment.

Chapter 7: Conclusion

“...there is no arriving, there is only the movement of learning—that is the beauty of life.”

—J. Krishnamurti³⁷⁰



Figure 3 Fabiola Nabil Naguib, *The Heart of Beauty Series*, 2011. Photograph.

³⁷⁰ J. Krishnamurti, *Can Humanity Change?: J. Krishnamurti in Dialogue with Buddhists* (Boston: Shambala, 2003): 167-168.

There is increasing attention on curation, from new books and journals to the global spread of biennales and academic training programs. Amidst this burgeoning scene, my project has sought to create breath and pause, re/membering curation within a transformative ethic of care and connectedness. In my dissertation I have uniquely and through sustained public reasoning developed a rationale and vision for curation that is responsive to purpose and value beyond current dictates and discourses of the artworld-academia post/industrial complex. The very premise of the dissertation—articulating curatorial bases and relations in connection to their human meanings—contrasts with widespread articulations of the curator as a professionalized instigator, academic expert, project manager, disc jockey, etc. I positioned the public orientation of curation as the nourishing of individual and collective human and nonhuman creativity and archiving within ecologies of co-flourishing and mutuality.

Through connectedness as an ethic and framework, I opened up the ontic and epistemic bases of curation, from artworld and scientism-shaped grounds of thought to narratives of culture and technology, and made a wide-ranging case for deepening cognitive and social responsibility and accountability in curatorial perception, motivation, reason and action. Connectedness emerged as a framework from my dialogic understanding of interrelationship and the creative-archival capacities of responsiveness to that interrelationship as integral to consciousness. Experiential ecologies of creativity, culture, and archiving were elaborated to underscore the world-involving, embodied bases of cognition, and how materiality, empiricism, emotions and value are entangled. I also elaborated on ways in which an integrative approach to culture and aesthetics aids cognitive justice and supports holistic and robustly dialogic understandings of beauty, truths, and goodness.

By rethinking the imperatives and geographies of curation within an eco-ethical humanist framework of connectivity, I marked a new direction in curatorial studies. My dissertation departed from routes that deploy critical vocabularies of intervention and discursivity or largely focus on artistic choices or interpretation, project framings and evaluations and art historicity, or questions of cultural policy and politics in a removed or depersonalized manner. Instead, I visibilized curatorial processes and relations pertaining to internal journeying, relations with others, and the earth, inclusive of and going far beyond museological and art historical terms, by expanding contexts and modes of personal and social cognition of creativity, culture, and archiving. These visibilizations were achieved by intricately holding together participatory understandings of consciousness and ethics, critiques of curation, and cosmopolitical conceptions of creativity and archiving. I proposed a re-visioning of the very logic of curation, making a case for a democratic curatorial reason with connectedness as a source of practical reason with regard to creative and archival engagement. By doing so, I not only contributed to illuminating and expanding terrains for transformative curatorial thought-reason-action but also cohesively articulated how creativity, archiving, and ethics form a living ecology.

In the introduction, I identified the disquieting that served as the germination of my dissertation. This disquieting stemmed from witnessing the transformative capacity of creativity being omitted, obscured or distorted in hegemonic imaginings and practices of culture and curation. In my chapter on the artworld-academia post/industrial complex, I detailed how the transformative capacity of creativity and sustenance of that capacity as curatorial agency were compromised by overvaluation of criticality in curatorial outlooks. Specifically, I outlined the need for relationality and connection to be curatorial imperatives with criticality being an aspect of an ethic of care and responsibility versus a dissociative and disembodied ideal. I argued for

connective curatorial imperatives that not only aid in envisioning creativity in the service of human and non-human flourishing but also deepen practical and ethical understandings and navigations of socio-political streaming and commodifying pressures within the artworld-academic post/industrial complex. I delineated the lack of democratization and ethical clarity that all too often saturates hegemonic curatorial reasoning and practice, including when this reasoning-practice has commitments to postcoloniality. I highlighted the role of unconceded entrenchment, attendant cognitive dissonance and the need for curators to courageously and honestly engage realities, truths, visions and practices that challenge theoretical, cognitive and relational dynamics as well as conventions. In other words, I called for an integrative expansion of individual as well as collective consciousness in relation to creative-ethical ecologies. I formulated a critique of the reification of creativity within constructs of conceptualism in artworld nexuses. I also further fleshed out my argument that the continuity of entitlement in imposing implied “sophistication” only by way of institutionally sanctioned thinking, creating or being necessitates a shift in consciousness from insider-based insularity to mutuality-based exchange — to consciously listen, communicate and witness. Being fully responsive in relationship, I have proposed and argued, is a most meaningful mode of curatorial engagement amidst creative flux out of which not only art but life and society emerge and re-emerge.

My contribution includes having developed the rich significance of personal responsibility and accountability in the curatorial task of supporting creative and archival sustenance, wholly and cohesively understood. I connected curation to sociocosmic and socioecological conceptions of creativity and archiving and indicated that this expansive vision does not discount what curators do professionally. I illuminated ways in which an intimate and expansive curatorial vision may imbue choices and actions, curatorial narrations and relations

with a deeper and wider sense of public reason and responsibility. Apart from finding resonant ways of mapping undervalued or ignored arenas and modes of transformative curatorial thought, reason, and action, my dissertation also reframed debates on art, materiality, culture and aesthetics.

In contrast to narratives of the novelty of contemporary art as social exchange or pre-participatory conceptions of the objecthood of art, I signified artistic as well as other forms of archiving within ecologies of experiential aliveness. I elaborated on the entanglement of materiality with experience and embodiment, community and value. I thereby challenged the atomization and reification of creativity and physicality as well as relationality generated by scientism and woven into hegemonic constructs of media and technology. Although I critically engaged with contexts of capitalism, I did not centralize the dynamics of commodification in relation to art or creativity. Specifically, I re/membered creativity in relation to the astuteness of our senses and body and our sensitivity and capacity for generosity of motivation and breadth of responsibility. My inquiry has come from awareness of the intricate connections between self and social processes of inequality *and* just transformation, underscoring the ethical-creative force of honesty, humility and personal accountability.

Instead of proposing a prescriptive politics of intellectual radicality, I emphasized emotionally healthy, sensuously alive, intellectually non-coercive creative-ethical-archival ecologies. These differences in my emphasis and outlook account for my curatorial call to view and value creativity, archiving, and social contribution more in relational terms — caring, nurturing, sustaining — and less in status-oriented, depersonalized and/or atomized cultural narratives. I view my differences and divergences in relation to other mappings of creativity, culture, and curation as opportunities for transformative dialogue. My strong epistemic and

ethical positioning in no way impacts my willingness and commitment to being capacious in my process, relations, and outlooks, in congruence with an ethic of care and the nondualist implications of interrelationality.

In response to popularized and influential ideas of culture focused on the centrality of pleasure and the best that has been conceived, with the aesthetic shaping the boundary between culture and everyday life, I developed a detailed alternate mapping. I made a case for the aesthetic as multidimensional ways we give shape and form to experience, as integrating forms of feeling, imagination and structuring, whether through art and language or values and perception. This grounding of aesthetics arose out of my articulation of culture as living and open collaborative inquiry, rooted in the together-doing or co-participatory nature of consciousness, perception, and agency. I argued for responsiveness, rather than the idea of pleasure at remove from the everyday, being at the heart of culture. In bringing together an integrative and connective understanding of culture, I revealed value, public responsibility and creativity-based interconnection among differentiated social spheres.

Through my ethico-social detailing of aesthetics, I demonstrated the interrelational bases of beauty with regard to experiences and realities, convictions and values, with the aim of deepening transparency and accountability in curatorial aesthetic judgments. I explored aesthetics as a form of public reason as a constructive way of moving aesthetics out of claims of pure subjectivity or disciplinary territoriality. Positioning aesthetics as a form of public reason assisted in highlighting the crossings of meaning, value, and ordering of experience with the pursuit of congruence and cohesiveness as an ongoing process and effort towards personal integrity and dialogic responsibility. Congruence and cohesiveness were also located within the pursuit of a coming together in conception and practice between individual good, collective

good, human good, and ecological good, with aesthetics defined as a constitutive aspect of this ethical-integrative process.

I worked to illuminate culture in a way that acknowledged its historical, ancestral, and socio-ecological grounding while keeping its living, responsive, and mobile bases actively situated. I articulated how the seeding of purpose and vision as present in the very evocation of culture provides a rich opening to anchor culture ethically. I integrated this ethical rooting with the idea of culture as embodied, agential together-doing which in essence counters constructs of culture that totalize or objectify differences or deny them. I argued that diversity of pathways to responsiveness is a meaningful way of thinking through a non-relativist, ethical conception of culture that can simultaneously be radically plural and open. Developing a sustained argument regarding connective conceptions of culture and aesthetics allowed for the expansion of the ethical re/membering of curation, which provided rich contours to my inquiry. For instance, how can the philosophical, practical, and social bases of the profession of curation be cognitively and socially assonant in relation to what one may have public reason to value as true, good, and/or beautiful? Holistic conceptions of creativity and culture also assisted in emphasizing that professional curatorial efforts may benefit from considering or expanding their visions and roles in conscious conjunction with ways individuals and communities, nature and cosmos contribute to sustaining human and nonhuman creativity.

I furthered my development of connective curatorial reason by re/imagining archiving as an ethical ecology of relationship. This re/imagining arose from my realization and recognition of the powerful role that science as a sign of the modern plays in valorizing reductive materiality and how this dislocates interrelational materialities of thought and perception, ethics and experience. I specified the role of Science as a metaphysical archival arbitrator, including how it

shapes linear imaginations of time, historicist norms, and disembodied understandings of rationality and empiricism. My contribution included demonstrating that curatorial engagement with culture could not be sufficiently integrative, connective or transformative without confronting the co-constitutions of science, modernity, and archiving. I made linkages between notions of a prioristic archival physicality, dominant ideas of media and technology and the bifurcation of truths and goodness under reductive empiricism. I illuminated intersections of dominant-modern archival architecture in arenas far beyond science, including curation. My constructive archival vision involved examining interrelationship and value in archiving, from erotic morality and expanded empiricism to scientific pluralities and cosmopolitical techno-ethics. I elucidated archiving as a living, collaborative process of knowledge-making and truth-seeking, co-constituted with ethical imaginations and practices, gathering its contextual meaning via embodiment in individual and collective striving. This archival recasting in turn strengthened the practical and conscious import of curation as an ethic of care by way of visibilizing emotions, values and worldviews as integral aspects of material realities and relations. In short, I argued that actively holistic understandings and activations of archiving render individual lives deeply relevant, and restore the objective importance of care as well as other generative sources of meaning and relationship that archival atomization casts aside.

I sought to create understanding that connected ways of being and relating carry empirical relevance and material impact irrespective of whether such activations are honored in dominant power/knowledge nexuses or registered in the reductionist ways solidity or presence is shaped by scientism. I argued that ethical re/memberings of archives are situationally present for us to collaboratively shape and inhabit, internally, in daily lives, across diverse relationalities and contexts. I utilized expansive archival ecologies to reveal and enrich connective archival reason

and meaning therefore opening up transformative possibilities of archival thought and practice and curatorial archival engagement.

Creativity is vital to individual and collective self-determination—it is a cosmopolitical force, integrating culture and biology, ecology and sociality, politics and cosmos, value and knowledge. Feeling and being more awake to creative life force, its democratic bases in all life and its ethical power, has transformed my curatorial perceptions and values, orientations and responses. It has instigated de-disciplining and the desire to affirm learning and growth, purpose and passion, connection and responsibility. Experiential-integrative awareness of the liberatory power and potential of creativity has inspired my endeavour to contribute to transformative ecologies of curation.

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