RE-IMAGINING NARRATIVES OF INTIMATE VIOLENCE: PHOTOVOICE INQUIRIES WITH QUEER NON/MONOGOMOUS COMMUNITIES IN LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA.

JAISIE WALKER
Bachelor of Arts, University of Lethbridge, 2017

A thesis submitted
in partial fulfilment of therequirements for the degree of

MASTERS OF ARTS

in

WOMEN & GENDER STUDIES

Faculty of Arts & Science
University of Lethbridge
LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA, CANADA

RE-IMAGINING NARRATIVES OF INTIMATE VIOLENCE: PHOTOVOICE INQUIRIES WITH QUEER NON/MONOGAMOUS COMMUNITIES IN LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

JAISIE WALKER

Date of Defence: August 12, 2020

Dr. Suzanne Lenon Thesis Supervisor	Associate Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. Kara Granzow Thesis Examination Committee Member	Associate Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. Christian Klesse Thesis Examination Committee Member	Associate Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. Nathan Rambukkana External Examiner Wilfrid Laurier University Waterloo, Ontario	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.
Dr. Julia Brassolotto Chair, Thesis Examination Committee	Assistant Professor	Ph.D.

Territorial Acknowledgment

This research was conducted in the Traditional Territory of the *Siksikaitsitapi* or Blackfoot people of the Blackfoot Confederacy (Kainai, Piikani and Siksika), as well as the Tsuu T'ina First Nation and Stoney Nakoda First Nation.[1]

Where we are is more than a piece of land to stand, walk, and research on top of. Rather, to this research, this land represents a politics of location for situated knowledges,[2] home to all of the activities that have and haven't been allowed, encouraged, coerced, resisted, and built here, and the *unsealed* nature of colonial enterprises.[3] Non/monogamies themselves hinge on constructions of gender, race, intimacy, community, and kinship that have been (re)produced through ongoing colonial enterprises in this place and elsewhere, creating an often alienating environment for Two-Spirit and Indigenous LGBTQA+ people whose relationship to non/monogamies have been dismissed, policed, punished, and appropriated.

Chelsea Vowel, a Métis writer and educator from the Plains Cree speaking community of *manitow-sâkahikan* (Lac Ste. Anne), Alberta, writes that speakers and readers of territory acknowledgements need to confront their own place on these lands. In particular, Vowel states, "Relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples in rural and remote areas tend to be strained, when not entirely non-existent," influenced in large part by the violent governance structures of settlers that dictate rural private property ownership, and the interplay of (hyper/in)visibility for Indigenous land, bodies, and communities, as a result of

[1] Native Land, "Territory Acknowledgement," Native Land, April 10, 2020, https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/.
[2] Adrienne Rich, "Notes Towards a Politics of Location," in *Feminist Postcolonial Reader*, eds. Reina Lewis and Sara Mills (New York & London: Routledge, 2003), 29-42.
[3] Qwo-Li Driskill, "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native Studies and Queer Studies," in *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit Memory* (Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016).

ongoing settler colonialism.[4]

Ultimately, I wish to acknowledge the colonial enterprises, epistemic appropriation, and stolen material and intellectual property, of which the University of Lethbridge, and us as researchers there, navigate, resist, profit from, and participate in.

[4] Chelsea Vowel, "Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements," *âpihtawikosisân: law, language, culture*. September 23, 2016. https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/#_ftnref2.

Dedication

To the people who contributed their photographs, stories, and theories. Thank you for your curiosity, thoughtfulness, brilliance, and trust.

Abstract

Seven collaborators in this project used PhotoVoice, a visual participatory action methodology, to explore the complexity of violence as it is lived, represented, and (re)defined in the context of queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge, Alberta. Critically engaging with the themes of neoliberalism, oversimplified positivity discourse, and the intersections of power and identity that often shape spaces of non/monogamies, collaborators considered prevailing narratives of violence within their communities, and how these narratives challenge or sustain conventional gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence. Through the participatory process, collaborators troubled what constitutes and qualifies violence, how violence is talked about, and made more explicit connections between interpersonal, community, and state violence. The visual and participatory approach was instrumental in reconceptualizing and making meaning from the complexities of violence in their lives and their communities; in particular, image-based storytelling challenges the role of language in facilitating and constraining the (un)speakability of violence.

Acknowledgements

I would like to express my deepest appreciation for my thesis Supervisor Dr. Suzanne Lenon for your years of intellectual fire, compassion, friendship, and encouragement. You unequivocally taught me that good work is generated with love and support, both to each other, and with ourselves. Thank you for believing in me often more than I believed in myself and being nothing short of a badass role model. Special thanks to the rest of my committee, Dr. Kara Granzow, Dr. Christian Klesse, and previous committee member Dr. Catherine Kingfisher, as well as my external reader Dr. Nathan Rambukkana. This thesis wouldn't be possible without your mentorship.

To my research collaborators Bear, Jingle, Joe, Lily, Simon, Quiet, and Tate: thank you for your enthusiasm with PhotoVoice and your willingness to try something new with me. Your stories were not only brilliantly creative, but both healing and profound for me and many others in our community. I hope you are proud of what you achieved, and more than anything, I hope my written work does your stories justice.

This thesis is successful in large part due to the people who challenged, supported, and stuck with me along the way. Mikey, Kristin, Kristina, Danielle, Emmy, the OUTreach team, and all the other friends who sat with me in coffee shops, held me through anxiety, and laughed with me endlessly. Your community meant the world to me. Additional thanks to my partner Brandon for the facetime calls, grounding rituals, reassurance, patience, and cups of tea. Thank you for finding ways to support me through time zones, global pandemics, sleepless nights, moments of self-doubt, and breakthroughs.

Thank you to the queer, feminist, Indigenous, anti-racist, and anti-colonial scholars/ activists whose intellectual legacies have had a profound impact on my life and this thesis, in particular, Dr. Kim TallBear, Dr. Eve Tuck, Dr. Christian Klesse, Jennifer Patterson, Dr.

Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha. I owe further gratitude to the social media activists doing incredible work in this field, especially Clementine Morrigan, Kevin Patterson, and BlakSyn.

Finally, thank you to The Penny Coffee House for letting me order minimal food and take table space for sometimes upwards of eight hours. Being there made the loneliness of grad school much more bearable, and I have abundant gratitude for the genuine community you provide.

Table of Contents

List of Tables

List of Figures

Introduction

Fig 1: Exhibit Zine "Introduction"

> Non-monogamies have the potential to completely change the way we view intimacy, relationships, and community, and resist some of the harmful norms that shape our lives. However, they can also be full of complexity, contradiction, and challenges, especially when we are confronted with our histories, our identities, and bigger structures of gender, race, (dis)ability, and labour. We hope this exhibit begins to make room for conversations of (anti)violence in queer non-monogamous community in Lethbridge. We invite you to learn alongside us, ask important questions, unpack your own experiences, and dream of being in relationship differently with one another (Research Collaborators).[5]

Research Overview

Seven collaborators in this project used PhotoVoice, a visual participatory action methodology, to explore the complexity of violence as it is lived, represented, and (re)defined in the context of queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge, Alberta. Critically engaging with the themes of neoliberalism and an oversimplified positivity discourse that often shape spaces of non/monogamies, collaborators considered the central research

[5] Collaborators. *Exhibit Zine: "What is the Exhibit About?*" 2020.

questions: What are the prevailing narratives of violence within queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge, and in what ways do these narratives challenge or sustain conventional gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence? Based on a series of creative prompts around the historical, institutional, and social conditions of non/monogamies that shape violence in their lives, seven collaborators engaged in a process of storytelling through photography. Following a co-curatorial interview about this process, they then critically discussed the resulting images, and, through a process of group consensus and curation, communicated their perspectives and desires for change with community stakeholders through an exhibit.

While this thesis does not make large claims to what the narratives of violence are for the totality of queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge, it can elucidate an answer from the voices of seven people. Together, collaborators troubled what constitutes and qualifies violence, how violence is talked about, and made more explicit connections between interpersonal, community, and state violence. Their complex and unfolding stories generated visual conversations that they organized into themes: "rethinking violence," "acceptable forms/stereotypes/ expectations of queerness," "labour, needs, and boundaries," "hierarchies," and "creating change." Collectively, these themes delineate the unmistakable bond between liberal ideas of political emancipation, and the often obscured violences felt in contexts of supposed freedom. The visual and participatory approach was instrumental in reconceptualizing and making meaning from the complexities of violence in their lives and their communities; in particular, image-based storytelling challenged the role of language in facilitating and constraining the (un)speakability of violence.

PhotoVoice in this context aimed to facilitate a desire-based research project based on Eve Tuck's call for communities, researchers, and educators to reconsider the long-term impacts of "damage-centered" research, where pain, brokenness, and deficit is highlighted to

hold those in power accountable for their oppression.[6] Allowing for the possibility of existence beyond survival, the collaborators' PhotoVoice bring awareness to both serious *and* playful forms of queer knowledge production. Their photographs invoke images of power, pleasure, and pain, and reconsider discourses of risk and vulnerability as well as the surprises and demands of labour when doing participatory anti-violence research.

Impulse for the Research

> What would happen if we, as queer, politicized, polyamorous communities acknowledged the regularity with which violence happens all around us? What if we stopped gaslighting people who are (justifiably) afraid? What if we held space for the legacies of trauma that so many of us carry and named loving for what it is, a daring act? What if we acknowledged that learning to love and be loved isn't easy, but that it can be done? What if we rooted out the shaming tactics from our writing and thinking on radical, anti-capitalist queer love? What if, instead of telling survivors that love is not a limited resource, we made the terrifying admission that it is? And we continued the work of love anyway.[7]

Non/monogamies activist and writer Clementine Morrigan's words from her most recent zine *Love without Emergency: I Want This but I Feel like I'm Going to Die / Writings on Attachment and Polyamory* set the scene for the intimate grassroots political struggle in which I found motivation for my thesis. These motivations primarily arose when I was working for a rural women's shelter as a community anti-violence educator in the year following my undergraduate degree. I was approached to facilitate an anti-violence workshop for a community Gender Sexuality Alliance (GSA), with a focus on queer anti-violence stereotypes and negotiating consent in non/monogamous relationships. My survey of the *Common Challenges and Problems* sections of several prominent guidebooks on non/monogamies[8] revealed an emphasis on "agreement violations," strategies for "voyag[ing]

[6] Eve Tuck, "Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities," *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009): 409-428, https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.3.n0016675661t3n15.
[7] Clementine Morrigan, *Love without Emergency: I Want This but I Feel like I'm Going to Die / Writings on Attachment, and Polyamory* (Montreal, Québec: Clementine Morrigan, 2019).
[8] Mark Michaels and Patricia Johnson, *Designer Relationships: A Guide to Happy Monogamy, Positive Polyamory, and Optimistic Open Relationships* (Jersey City, NJ: Cleis Press, 2015); Jenny Yuen, *Polyamorous:*

into uncharted emotional territory,"[9] feeling and coping with intense feelings of jealousy, insecurity, and possessiveness.[10] However, there is a distinct absence of ways to interrogate power and violence in these contexts, as well as a reliance on happiness discourse, psychological well-being, and satisfaction studies that compare relationship quality with monogamous couples.[11] While helpful in their own right, these texts, to me, felt somewhat removed from the wider political agendas of antimonogamy advanced within feminism, queer liberation, and anticapitalist countercultural movements. Indeed, community members and scholars continue to identify a lack of engagement with power relations as a striking feature of self-help, activist, and academic literature on non/monogamies,[12] which often fail to go beyond narrowly defined identity concerns, and can obscure critiques of violence amidst oversimplified positivity discourse.[13]

Stories circulating from friends and community, in addition to a resource from The National Domestic Violence Hotline confirmed that violence *is* happening in Lethbridge's queer non/monogamous communities,[14] often punctuated in by situations such as: Your partner has cheated and decides they want to open things up as a result; Your partner wants to be non/monogamous but doesn't want you to have sex with or date anyone else; or You feel like you need to open up your relationship in order to keep it going. Further reading led me to critical feminist anti-violence literature, such as *Queering Sexual Violence* and *The*

Living and Loving More (Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2018), 75; Tristan Taormino, *Opening Up: A Guide to Creating and Sustaining Open Relationships* (San Fransisco: Cleis Press, 2008), 153.

[9] Yuen, *Polyamorous.*

[10] Tristan Taormino, *Opening Up.*

[11] Christian Klesse, "'How to be a Happy Homosexual?!' Non-Monogamy and Governmentality in Relationship Manuals for Gay Men in the 1980s and 1990s," *The Sociological Review* 55, no. 3 (2007): 571-591, https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954x.2007.00722.x.

[12] Jin Haritaworn, Chin-Ju Lin, and Christian Klesse, "Poly/logue: A Critical Introduction to Polyamory," *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006):, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706069963.

[13] Elizabeth Wilkinson, "What's Queer about Non-Monogamy Now?" in *Understanding Non-monogamies,* eds. M. Barker and D. Langdridge (New York: Routledge, 2010).

[14] Melissa, a Hotline Advocate. "Polyamory and Abuse." The National Domestic Violence Hotline, May 30, 2019. https://www.thehotline.org/2019/05/30/polyamory-and-abuse/.

Revolution Starts at Home,[15] both of which referenced violence happening in activist and non/monogamous communities. However, violence in non/monogamous communities was not the primary focus of any given research, excerpt, or chapter. What I *did* know is that these conversations around violence were already happening in the queer activist spaces that characterized my community, and that space to work through these experiences *mattered* to our wellbeing, our growth, and our justice movements. As Morrigan puts forth in her quote that opens this section, there is power in queer, politicized, non/monogamous communities acknowledging, confronting, and naming the regularity with which violence happens all around us, holding space for our legacies of trauma, and doing the work of love anyway.

Background to the Research

While Chapter One provides a fuller review of the literature, here I wish to introduce some of the main frameworks, discussions, and impulses for doing this particular research at this time and in this context.

i. Critiques of Power in Studies of Non/Monogamies

Non/monogamies[16] have been interpreted as a relationship practice, philosophy, theory, lovestyle, relationship orientation, relationship identity, sexual orientation, and even a "'hard wired' durable disposition, which deeply informs [a] sense of selfhood."[17] *Polyamory*, often used synonymously with non/monogamy or Consensual Non-Monogamy (CNM), is the form of non/monogamy most commonly understood and researched. Other forms included in the scope of non/monogamies are: *Relationship Anarchy*, a non-hierarchical philosophy that

[15] Jennifer Patterson, *Queering Sexual Violence* (Riverdale Avenue Books, 2016); Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, eds., *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities* (Chico, CA: AK Press, 2016).
[16] While polygamy is another form of non/monogamy, it falls outside the scope of this proposed research project.
[17] Christian Klesse, "Polyamory: Intimate Practice, Identity or Sexual Orientation?" *Sexualities* 17, no. 1-2 (2014): 82, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460713511096.

refuses terms like "primary partners" and incorporates coworkers and acquaintances into spheres of intimacy; *Solo-Poly*, an approach to poly that emphasizes autonomy and agency, and decenters "coupledom;" *Open Relationships*, for more casual relationship exploration; *Ethical Non-Monogamy*, which emphasizes consent and communication; *Relationship-By-Design*, a customizable approach; *Monogamish*, where a primary couple explores exclusively sexual relationships outside of their dyad; and other forms less bound by language, including swinging, swapping, lesbian polyfidelity, casual gay-male sex, kinky play, communal experiments, orgies, "understandings," and those that are simply *not monogamous*.[18] For the last twenty years, scholars have worked to conceptualize non/monogamy in relation to 'compulsory monogamy' and 'mononormativity'—concepts that describe the institutional, discursive, and practical systems which make monogamy appear coherent, normal and right.[19]

Described by scholars as a relational paradigm where it is possible, valid and worthwhile to maintain consensual, multiple affective and sexual relationships simultaneously,[20] non/monogamies are "connected with sexual and emotional freedom, personal empowerment, liberation from patriarchal oppression, ethical interpersonal behavior, honesty and communication, non-possessive love and overcoming of jealousy, and psychospiritual growth."[21] Deeper than this, non/monogamies are understood by queer communities to foster communities of interdependence and networks of care; value platonic friendships; promote shared vulnerability with metamours; create space to explore sexual desires and compatibility; provide room to get to know oneself in different contexts; create

[18] Nathan Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies: Non/monogamy in the Public Sphere* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016), 162.
[19] Adrienne Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence," *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631-660; Christine Overall, "Monogamy, Nonmonogamy, and Identity," *Hypatia* 13, no. 4 (1998): 1-17; Mimi Schippers, *Beyond Monogamy: Polyamory and the Future of Polyqueer Sexualities* (New York: New York University Press, 2016).
[20] Jorge N. Ferrer, "Mononormativity, Polypride, and the "Mono–Poly Wars,"" *Sexuality & Culture* 22, no. 3 (September 2018): https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9494-y; Haritaworn, Lin, and Klesse, "Poly/logue."
[21] Ferrer, "Mononormativity," 818.

chosen family; inspire opportunities to be brave; envision new ways to build and express commitment and security; and initiate enduring relationships that embrace the changing shape of intimacy.[22] Considering this, as well as research into queer non/monogamous subjectivities and communities that continue to identify non/monogamies as "part of lives lived queerly,"[23] non/monogamous relationships are understood to be positive modes of queer resistance to heteronormativity, and a catalyst for mobilizing political values and re-envisioning relationship possibilities that are more responsible, caring, and loving. Non/monogamous communities are imagined to be paramount spaces of resistance when it comes to re-imagining the relationship between the state and the intimate realm, beyond the mere inclusion of polyamory and other non/monogamous intimate relationships in certain pieces of legislation.[24]

However, imagining this kind of intimacy must involve responsibly attending to the social relations of power that condition the possibilities for and of non/monogamous relationships. Kim TallBear, for example, discusses the importance of focusing on structural analyses, particularly the intersections of heteronormativity and settler colonialism, for any intervention on pleasure, choice, and consent.[25] Similarly, Nathan Rambukkana's concept of "intimate privilege" points to not only the significant *constraints* that racial, gendered, and spatial social locations have on transgressive relationship possibilities, but the way they *converge and maintain* power in spaces of intimacy along "well-worn intersecting and

[22] Clementine Morrigan. *Love Without Emergency*, 2019.
[23] Krista L. Benson, "Tensions of Subjectivity: The Instability of Queer Polyamorous Identity and Community," *Sexualities* 20, no. 1-2 (2017): 26, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716642154.
[24] For example, inclusion-based advocacy: Michael MacDonald, "3 Adults in Polyamorous Relationship Declared Legal Parents by N.L. Court," *The Canadian Press,* June 14, 2018." https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/polyamourous-relationship-three-parents-1.4706560; and other criticisms around polyamorous citizenship demonstrated by Pablo Navarro Pérez, "Beyond Inclusion: Non-Monogamies and the Borders of Citizenship," *Sexuality & Culture* 21, no. 2 (2017): 441-458, https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-016-9398-2.
[25] Kim TallBear, "Yes, Your Pleasure! Yes, Self-Love! And Don't Forget, Settler Sex Is a Structure*," *The Critical Polyamorist*, April 22, 2018. http://www.criticalpolyamorist.com/homeblog/yes-your-pleasure-yes-self-love-and-dont-forget-settler-sex-is-a-structure.

interlocking contours of socio-cultural power."[26] As he elaborates, despite breaking open new spaces to relate to one other, this "brave new world of multiplicitous love and connection, a heterotopia striving to be the best and brightest model of intimacy, may in its sunny optimism be shutting others out, ignoring intersecting privileges, and even alienating potential subjects and allies."[27]

Given these critiques, PhotoVoice prompts and initial conversations with collaborators asked them to consider their experiences beyond themselves as individuals, as well as how power appears, and is felt, conceptualized, and contested in their relationships. Indeed, collaborator's PhotoVoice inquiries weave important critiques of power relating to their queer non/monogamous relationships, including: geospatial, political, and embodied experiences of violence (Tate); resistance to discourses of egalitarianism (Bear); critiques of class, labour, and relationship violence (Simon); the gendered inclusionary politics of (non)consent and assault in queer spaces (Quiet); the invasiveness of medical institutions and medications on their ability to communicate consent (Lily); and critiques of state responses to non/monogamous relationship violence (Bear, Quiet, Jingle), to name a few.

ii Picturing Violence: Voices of the Anti-Violence Movement

Of course, the urgency for non/monogamies scholarship that centers power relations also represents an urgent need to reconceptualize and address violence in non/monogamous contexts. This is crucial as scholars in sexuality and gender studies are identifying how neoliberal formations of non/monogamous intimacies and agency are inadvertently (or not) animating intimate violence in new *queer* ways, particularly where the emphasis on unlimited freedom in non-monogamous relationships has become a way to gaslight, control, or dismiss

[26] Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies*, 159.
[27] Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies*, 148.

legitimate relationship concerns.[28] Activists online are creating new language around power, violence, and intimate privilege for non/monogamous communities. Morgan from @chillpolyamory, for example, defines *Seesawing* as "vacillating between commitment and noncommitment in a way that confuses your partners, and between consistent and inconsistent respect of boundaries, in a way that harms your partners;" and *Polyfuckery* as, "people who claim ethical polyamory but behave in self-centered ways that hurt the people they love."[29] Indeed, in a conversation piece with Dossie Easton, the co-author of the book *The Ethical Slut*,[30] one of the most popular guide books on polyamory, Christian Klesse notes how scholars of non/monogamies are becoming "wary that [Easton's] appeal to a psychologistic individualism and liberal contractarianism may ultimately work to increase the 'sexual privileges' of white, non-trans, middle-class people."[31]

While these power-based concerns within non/monogamies are slowly gaining attention, anti-violence approaches still privilege the language and quantifications of "police-reported incidents," of "intimate partner violence" between "same-sex partners." Here, identity is a binary of "female victims and their male assailants,"[32] or violent lesbian and gay victimization, through "violent crimes."[33] LGBTQ+ anti-violence scholarship has primarily focused on the programs and resources of the state aligned anti-violence movement for psychological and quantitative studies, exploring correlations between demographic

[28] Meg Barker and Darren Langdrige, "Whatever Happened to Non-Monogamies? Critical Reflections on Recent Research and Theory," *Sexualities* 13, no. 6 (December 2010), https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460710384645.
[29] Morgan. *Polyamory Terminology Q&A*, @chillpolyamory, Instagram Live, March 8, 2020.
[30] Donnie Easton and Janet Hardy, *The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities* (Emeryville, CA: Greenery Press, 1997).
[31] Christian Klesse, "Expert Interview: The Trials and Tribulations of Being a 'Slut'-Ethical, Psychological, and Political Thoughts on Polyamory," *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 644, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706070006.
[32] Dyna Ibrahim, "Police-Reported Violence among Same-Sex Intimate Partners in Canada, 2009 to 2017," Statistics Canada, March 20, 2019, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00005-eng.htm.
[33] Laura Simpson, "Violent Victimization of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals in Canada, 2014." Statistics Canada, May 31, 2018, https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54923-eng.htm.

variables and experiences of violence and abuse as victims/survivors or perpetrators. This scholarship, as Donovan and Barnes review:

> has not sufficiently reflected the parallel growth of more complex, fluid and subjective ways of theorising and claiming (or indeed rejecting) gender identities, sexualities and intimacies. Consequently, domestic violence and abuse in LGB and/or T relationships is often problematically regarded as synonymous with 'same-sex' domestic violence; survey instruments almost exclusively assume monogamous relationships; and studies are described as narrowly focusing on 'lesbian', 'gay' or even 'homosexual' populations, or conversely through applying catch-all terms such as 'gender and sexually diverse.'[34]

These processes of measurement and classification sustain an anti-violence movement that, overwhelmed by the need for safety and redress, and the desire for stable funding, devotes much of its energy to keeping current services operational in the face of declining support for all social welfare programs.[35] While this kind of violence *is* happening, people's lives hold complex relationships to violence that cannot be summed up by the terms "survivor" or "perpetrator,"[36] and oftentimes, as Pusey and mehrotra convey, "community members' experiences of identity, social context, and oppression amplify their reliance on the very things that interventions to violence ask them to risk: the security of their relationships with their partner, close friends, and/or queer, progressive, or ethnic communities."[37] Furthermore, disconnecting interpersonal violence from the complicated rebellions and riots against queer-phobia, state violence, and white supremacy ignores the growing chorus of queer and trans voices that are refusing to accept state-sanctioned definitions of safety and accountability, particularly in an era when the political efforts by mainstream LGBTQA+

[34] Catherine Donovan and Rebecca Barnes, "Domestic Violence and Abuse in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender (LGB and/or T) Relationships," *Sexualities* 22, no. 5–6 (September 2019): 742, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716681491.
[35] Kristin Bumiller, *In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement Against Sexual Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008).
[36] Chen, Dulani, and Piepzna-Samarasinha, *The Revolution Starts at Home*.
[37] Chen, Dulani, and Piepzna-Samarasinha, *The Revolution Starts at Home*, 247.

organizations (in both Canada and the US as well as elsewhere) are focused on privacy and rights-based equality measures that ultimately consolidate Western neoliberal nation-states.[38]

Challenging the existing gender theories on domestic violence and abuse has consequently been extremely important in representing and reconceptualizing LGBTQA+ violence. Important work that has introduced narratives from queer, trans, and gender non-conforming organizers are Ching-In Chen, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha's *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence within Activist Communities*,[39] and more recently Jennifer Patterson's *Queering Sexual Violence: Radical Voices from Within the Anti-Violence Movement*.[40] Both are anthologies that aim to resist the reductive focus of the "violence against women" framework, and the victim/perpetrator dichotomies of the anti-violence movement. Inspired by the actions of groups like Critical Resistance, The Audre Lorde Project's Safe OUTside the System (SOS) Collective and INCITE! Women of Color Against Violence, these authors provide a critical intervention for anti-violence and accountability discourse, connecting conversations to disability and racial justice, sex worker rights, queer and trans liberation, and prison industrial complex abolition.

What, then, are the discursive and historical forces being reanimated in non/monogamous processes of reclamation, experimentation, and desire? What shapes the political unconsciousness of non/monogamies in Southern Alberta, and in what ways are intimate privileges negotiated, contested, and reproduced? And perhaps most importantly, how do we talk about violence, particularly within queer community, that moves beyond melancholic fixations of tragedy and loss? In what follows, I seek to contribute to an emerging critique that resists the gender-based normativity of the mainstream anti-violence

[38] Chen, Dulani, and Piepzna-Samarasinha, *The Revolution Starts at Home*; OmiSoore H. Dryden, Suzanne Lenon, and Julian Awwad, *Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalisms and the Politics of Belonging* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015); Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2007).
[39] Chen, Dulani, and Piepzna-Samarasinha, *The Revolution Starts at Home*.
[40] Patterson, *Queering Sexual Violence*.

movement, and challenges the parameters set for researching, conceptualizing, and addressing violence. This research also attends to that fact that not only is violence in queer non/monogamies *not* being adequately discussed or addressed in rural contexts, but it is also not being discussed and addressed in ways that challenge domains of power such as settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy that continue to shape and impact queer lives. Consequently, I seek to continue the critical mandates of scholars of non/monogamies who complicate the relationship between complicity and community and address the unchallenged assumptions of violence in LGBTQA+ rural non/monogamous community.

Terminology

i. Non/Monogamy

I use Angela Willey's conceptualization of "non/monogamy"[41] to convey the historical and normative tensions between monogamy and non-monogamies, with the "/" representing the monogamous/non-monogamous discursive field. As two aspects of a single sexual, romantic, social, and cultural system of relations, Rambukkana asserts this framing of non/monogamy is a linked system of "variegated and interpenetrating fields of relations, hardly a binary at all outside of the highly limited heteronormative mould that casts them as separate."[42]

This term used throughout this research as an acknowledgement that non/monogamies are not at a point of arrival, and cannot (and should not) be separated from the legacies of monogamy and heteronormativity that we all simultaneously inherit, internalize, resist, and reproduce. Non/monogamies, for many of the collaborators in this research project, represent

[41] Angela Willey, "'Christian Nations,' 'Polygamic Races' and Women's Rights: Toward a Genealogy of Non/Monogamy and Whiteness," *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (December 1, 2006): 530-546, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706069964.
[42] Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies*, 15.

a dual space where these legacies are in one moment escaped from, and in the next moment, more amplified than ever. Throughout their PhotoVoice projects collaborators invent their own language to describe the discursive space that this term attempts to capture. For example, Bear's critique of unachievable egalitarian ideals as "monogamy under gift-wrapping," and Tate's discussion of non/monogamies as both queer and damaging in their life: "no matter what, there's the resistance to the violence of heteropatriarchy. It does protect you from harms a little. It definitely puts you in different ones. It's sort of six of one, half a dozen of the other."

ii. Queer Identity Categories, Actors, and Acronyms

The terminology employed throughout this thesis is neither consistent nor singular. My use of particular terms follows how they are used in the specific context under discussion; For example, I used "LGBT2SA+" during the recruitment stages of this research, meaning documents or sections of writing that refer to that period may use this particular acronym. Direct quotes from other scholars, activists, and the research collaborators feature "LGBT+," "LGBTQ+," and "LGBTQ2S+," often indicating that the research was limited to particular political moments, locations, and participants. In my own analysis, I often use "LGBTQA+" or "LGBTQ2S+" to reference more broader political movements, or formalized institutions of anti-violence activism. I also employ "queer" as a shorthand for all of the above terminology as a general political and relational identifier, as well as for ease of writing, all the while cognizant of Gloria Anzaldúa's point that "queer" as an umbrella "homogenizes, erases our differences."[43] I intentionally removed the "2S" from acronyms I use to refer to research collaborators, as no Two-Spirit and/or Indigiqueer collaborators were recruited. However, this should not erase the fact that settler sexuality, colonialism, and

[43] Gloria Anzaldúa, "To(o) Queer the Writer: Loca, Escritoria y Chicana," in *Inversions: Writings by Queer Dykes and Lesbians*, ed. Betsy Warland (Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1991), 249-250.

Indigenous activism, continue to define the lives of all research collaborators, as well as their extended communities in Lethbridge.

iii. Collaborators

The term "participants" was initially chosen to describe the people involved in this research. However, over time, it became clear that this term did not fairly or adequately describing their involvement. Instead I chose the term "collaborators," inspired by Jessica Field's use of this in queer feminist Participatory Action Research.[44] This language choice attempts to address the following circumstances: that this research, while not on paper, was inspired by countless conversations I had with collaborators and other community members in the year prior to its commencement; the long-standing professional and personal relationships I had with the people who volunteered to be involved, and the ways we have shaped each other's lives; and the strong direction they provided for their PhotoVoice projects, the exhibit event planning, our interviews, and every stage of the participatory process. Indeed, "participants" would suggest that they participated in a pre-established project, which is very unlike the group collaboration that characterized our discussions, adaptations, adjustments, and contributions.

However, my use of "collaborators" must be understood alongside my critiques of emancipatory research, which I explain further in Chapter Two. As Jin Haritaworn summarizes in their discussion of queer methodology and empirical research:

> Participants are not merely raw, pre-theoretical sources of 'experience', but active producers of their own interpretations, which compete with those of the researcher. Nevertheless, this competition does not occur on a level playing field, and the researcher has the last word at the stage of analysis (Phoenix 1994). This renders it necessary to reflect on and make our part in the narratives visible, which do not emerge from a social vacuum (Bhavnani 1993). How we arrive at our sample, what questions we ask of our participants, how they respond to these questions, which parts of our co-produced dialogue we extract, and how we edit and interpret them, are at

[44] Jessica Fields, "The Racialized Erotics of Participatory Research: A Queer Feminist Understanding," *Women's Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 3-4 (2016): 31-50, https://doi.org/10.1353/wsq.2016.0034.

> least as much a function of our own positionings as those of our interviewees. As many feminist methodologists themselves have recognised (Stacey 1988), this ultimately limits the emancipatory claims which we can make about our research.[45]

This term, therefore, does not imply that collaborators were involved in the exact same ways that I was as a researcher, but rather, more accurately describes our relationships, and collaborators' theoretical and methodological contributions throughout the entirety of the research project.

Thesis Outline

In Chapter One: *Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks*, I situate the intersections of this research, introducing studies and critiques of power through the sections: LGBTQA+ Non/Monogamies, Metronormativity and Urban/Rural Imaginaries, Feminist Theorizations of Violence, Compulsory (Hetero)mononormativity, and Intersectionality.

In Chapter Two: *PhotoVoice Design, Collaboration, and Co-Curation*, I provide in-depth insights into how this research was conceptualized, designed, practiced, and created. Beginning with the visual and participatory approach offered by PhotoVoice and leading to the exhibit that collaborators planned for their community, I outline the adaptations, theorizing, and methodological actions that we took as a group. I further discuss the challenges that the lingering tensions of empiricist inquiry and the (un)speakability of violence through image-based storytelling presented for us throughout the project.

Chapter Three: *Themes in Non/Monogamies: Living Inquiries by and for Queer Communities* is structured around the themes collaborators generated from the *Group Curation* stage of the participatory cycle. These non-discrete themes, "Rethinking Violence," "Labour, Needs, and Boundaries," "Hierarchies," "Acceptable Forms/Stereotypes/ Expectations of Queerness," and "Creating Change" together represent the meeting points of

[45] Jin Haritaworn, "Shifting Positionalities: Empirical Reflections on a Queer/Trans of Colour Methodology," *Sociological Research Online* 13, no. 1 (2008): 1-12, https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.1631.

their individual PhotoVoice stories, which communicate the importance of place-based, structural, and relational anti-violence lenses in non/monogamous contexts.

Finally, I ground Chapter Four: *PhotoVoice as Intervention: Reflections from Collaborators, Guests, and Organizers* in the feedback I received during the PhotoVoice Exhibit. Their collaboration and participation sparked ideas for future change and program development, but also present moments of solidarity, growth, and friction that changed how collaborators and guests internalized, processed, and sought support for the violence in their lives.

Chapter One:

Literature Review and Theoretical Frameworks

1.1 Literature Review

1.1.1 LGBTQA+ Non/Monogamies

Research on non/monogamies focuses largely on polyamorous relationships and families, including their relationship dynamics and family formation,[46] the monitoring and categorizing of polyamorous sexual behaviours,[47] and conceptualizing polyamory as a practice versus identity or orientation.[48] In particular, research interest in multiple attraction and attachment among polyamorous triads or throuples (three or more people in the relationship), and quads (four or more people in the relationship), is on the rise, in addition to questions about jealousy and relationship satisfaction.[49] According to a content analysis of scholarship on consensual non/monogamies by Brewster et al, the three most commonly addressed topics from a social scientific lens published from 1926 through 2016, excluding articles specific to polygamy, were: relationship roles (boundary setting, need fulfillment, and sexual agreements), monogamy (marriage, stigma of polyamory, and household composition), and LGBTQ concerns, primarily around identity development, identity disclosure/concealment, and community belongingness. [50]

---

[46] Alison Rose Moss, "Alternative Families, Alternative Lives: Married Women Doing Bisexuality," *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 8, no. 5 (2012): 1-5, https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428x.2012.729946.
[47] Ethan Czuy Levine et al., "Open Relationships, Nonconsensual Nonmonogamy, and Monogamy among U.S. Adults: Findings from the 2012 National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior," *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 47, no. 5 (2018): 1439-1450, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1178-7.
[48] Klesse, "Polyamory: Intimate Practice."
[49] Meg Barker, Jamie Heckert, and Eleanor Wilkinson, "Polyamorous Intimacies: From One Love to Many Loves and Back Again," in *Mapping Intimacies: Relations, Exchanges, Affects*, eds. Tam Sanger and Yvette Taylor (London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013); Jillian Deri, *Love's Refraction: Jealousy and Compersion in Queer Women's Polyamorous Relationships* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015); Levine et al., "Open Relationships;" Moss, "Alternative Families, Alternative Lives," Patterson, *Queering Sexual Violence*.
[50] Melanie Elyse Brewster et al., "A Content Analysis of Scholarship on Consensual Nonmonogamies: Methodological Roadmaps, Current Themes, and Directions for Future Research," *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice* 6, no. 1 (2017): 32-47, https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000074.

Often seen as a solution for exploring bi (sexuality/romanticism) and pan (sexuality/romanticism) within partnerships, and a means of queering relationship norms, non/monogamies' intimate queer connection has received a lot of scholarly attention. Recently, work has emerged that addresses queer people's experiences of non/monogamies, such as Barker and Landridge's review of polyamory, swinging, and gay open relationships,[51] Jillian Deri's work on jealousy in polyamorous relationships among lesbian, bisexual, and queer women,[52] explorations into gay male and bisexual non-monogamies, sexual politics, and multi-partner marriage,[53] and Schippers theorizing of polyqueer sexualities.[54] These critical interventions attempt to move beyond the identitarianism of the more commonly researched themes relating to identity development and identity disclosure/concealment, and the prevalence of inclusionary politics still evidenced in chapters like Jenny Yuen's *Visible and Invisible Minorities: Underrepresented Communities Within Polyamory*.[55] Accordingly, this research contributes to the growing body of literature that instead critiques queer non/monogamous struggles of power and tensions of subjectivity.[56]

1.1.2 Critiques of Power in Non/monogamies

As Jessica Kean discusses, the material and discursive realities of dis/ability, friendship, gender, health, and work are just some of the factors that have the capacity to "texture" a person's experience of non-monogamous relationship structures.[57] Amidst a growing body of scholarship that is interested in issues of overlooked gender inequity and

[51] Barker and Landridge, "Whatever Happened to Non-Monogamies."
[52] Deri, *Love's Refraction.*
[53] Christian Klesse, "Bisexuality, Slippery Slopes, and Multipartner Marriage," *Journal of Bisexuality* 18, no. 1 (2018): 35-53, https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1373264; Moss, "Alternative Families, Alternative Lives."
[54] Schippers, *Beyond Monogamy.*
[55] Yuen, *Polyamorous*.
[56] Barker, Heckert, and Wilkinson, "Polyamorous Intimacies;" Benson, "Tensions of Subjectivity;" Haritaworn, Lin, and Klesse, "Poly/logue;" Schippers, *Beyond Monogamy*; Wilkinson, "What's Queer about Non-Monogamy;" Willey, "'Christian Nations,' 'Polygamic Races' and Women's Rights."
[57] Jessica Joan Kean, "Relationship Structure, Relationship Texture: Case Studies in Non/Monogamies Research," *Cultural Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2017): 19-35, https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v23i1.4955.

power within non-monogamous relationships, Mimi Schippers articulates a kind of poly-hegemonic masculinity, including the "alpha male syndrome," where the idea of 'having' multiple women signifies status and power.[58] Furthermore, studies examining emotional labour alongside non-monogamous time management and communication have discussed how, because emotional work is socialized as 'women's work,' women who are partnered with men in non-monogamous relationships are faced with disproportionate levels of emotional labour.[59]

There is a significant amount of literature that critiques discourses of sexual hierarchies within non/monogamies. Often called ''responsible non-monogamy,'' polyamory has been regarded as ethically superior not only to monogamy but also to ''non-responsible'' nonmonogamies such as casual sex, promiscuity, or swinging.[60] Wilkinson discusses how the combined "appeal to sameness" to hetero-nuclear normativities, as well as an oversimplified positivity discourse, reasserts polyamorists as "mature, responsible, and normal." This sentiment is encapsulated in a press interview where one polyamorist states: "but we "polys" are just like anyone else- civilized, polite, and appropriate."[61] The whiteness and classism evident in polyamory's civility discourse have not gone unnoticed, but is considerably under-researched. In her blog, *The Critical Polyamorist*, which addresses Indigenous, racial, and cultural politics related to open non-monogamy,[62] Kim TallBear, for example, critiques the sexual hierarchies of "solo-poly" as a form of settler sexuality that disproportionately privileges coupling: "more rule-bound and couple-centric forms of polyamory privilege the married, cohabiting, child-sharing couple as "primary," with additional relationships being

[58] Schippers, *Beyond Monogamy*; Elizabeth Sheff, "Poly-Hegemonic Masculinities" *Sexualities* 9, no.5, (2006): 621-642. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706070004.
[59] Schippers, *Beyond Monogamy*.
[60] Christian Klesse, "Polyamory and its 'Others': Contesting the Terms of Non-Monogamy," *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 565-583, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706069986.
[61] Wilkinson, *Beyond Monogamy*, 349.
[62] Racial privilege among polyamorists is also discussed in Elisabeth Sheff and Corie Hammers, "The Privilege of Perversities: Race, Class and Education among Polyamorists and Kinksters," *Psychology & Sexuality* 2, no. 3 (2011): 198-223, https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2010.537674.

"secondary," intimate practices that are "linked to property, consumption, couple and marriage privilege."[63] TallBear's critiques mirror similar concerns like those of Haritaworn et al who state that, despite popular polyamory discourse emerging at the intersections of many important social movements that were responding to feminist, gay and socialist critiques of the family, monogamy and private property, "writers have neglected the violent racist, transphobic, ableist and bodyist context within which we all, as multiply positioned subjects, negotiate our sexual and partner choices." [64]

Therefore, although scholars have given considerable time and attention to categorizing and describing non/monogamous routines, vocabularies, and daily activities, my research contributes beyond mere description, attending to the ways in which socio-historical contexts come to *produce* queer non/monogamous violence, particularly in relation to gendered, classed, and racialized relations of power in Lethbridge. Central to this research, then, rather than defending *either* monogamy or non/monogamy, will be to destabilize the 'non-monogamous relationship' as a fixed entity,[65] considering instead the surprisingly similar, cultural spaces *between* monogamy and non/monogamy, and how this linked approach changes the way we conceptualize LGBTQA2S+ violence in non/monogamous contexts.

1.1.3 Metronormativity & Urban/ Rural Imaginaries

"No longer seen as a backdrop or container for social relations," Kelly Baker explains how "space is deemed crucial to the constitution and reproduction of social relations and identities."[66] This theory of spatial productivity mirrors Sherene Razack's critique of

[63] TallBear, "Yes, Your Pleasure!"
[64] Haritaworn, Lin, and Klesse, "Poly/logue," 517.
[65] Kean, "Relationship Structure, Relationship Texture."
[66] Kelly Baker, "Out Back Home: An Exploration of LGBT Identities and Community in Rural Nova Scotia, Canada," in *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Studies*, eds. Mary L. Gray and Colin R. Johnson (New York & London: New York University Press, 2016), 29.

space as a seemingly unproblematic, common sense notion, "a field, a simple emptiness in which all things are 'situated' and 'located,'"[67] provoking instead an interrogation of how people come to know themselves in and through space, and within multiple systems of domination. In this vein, scholars in queer and sexuality studies are identifying the 'metronormativity' of urban-centric studies, and the need for scholarship in rural, liminal and 'in-between' spaces, particularly in small towns.[68] But metronormativity, Jack Halberstam's shorthand phrase to describe this pattern, is not merely about the inclusion of rural space. Rather, it challenges scholars' tendency to establish a binaristic path from rural, backward "closeted" life to "openly" queer, "liberated" urbanite via the transformative potential of migration."[69] Lucas Crawford, in their scholarship on the potentials of queer rural temporality, describes how 'city' and 'country' are fixed in temporal narratives that anchor urban dwellers to "postmodern aesthetics usually associated with urban architecture, urban trans and queer communities, urban literature, and the parody and pastiche made possible in urban performance scenes and drag bars"- a grouping that cautions queer people not to live in rural spaces.[70] As part of her research on queer oral histories in Lethbridge and Southern Alberta, Tiffany Muller Myrdahl also insists that there remains an attachment to the expectation that queer place-making requires a critical mass of LGBQ people, a liberal socio-cultural urban environment; and a history of LGBTQA2S+ activism.[71] The shift from rural to

[67] Sherene H. Razack, ed. *Race, Space, and the Law: Unmapping a White Settler Society* (Toronto: Between the Lines, 2002), 7.
[68] Kath Browne and Gavin Brown, *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities* (New York: Routledge, 2016); Colin R. Johnson, Brian J. Gilley, and Mary L. Gray, "Introduction," in *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Studies*, eds. Mary L. Gray and Colin R. Johnson (New York & London: New York University Press, 2016), 25-48; Valerie Joyce Korinek, *Prairie Fairies: A History of Queer Communities and People in Western Canada, 1930-1985* (Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018); Katherine Schweighofer, "Rethinking the Closet: Queer Life in Rural Geographies," in *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies*, eds. Mary L. Gray, Colin R. Johnson, and Brian J. Gilley (New York: New York University Press, 2016), 223-243.
[69] Korinek, *Prairie Fairies*, 7.
[70] Lucas Crawford, "A Good Ol' Country Time: Does Queer Rural Temporality Exist?" *Sexualities* 20, no. 8 (December 2017): 907, https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716674930.
[71] Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, "Ordinary (Small) Cities and LGBQ Lives," *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 12, no. 2 (2013): 279-304, https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/963.

urban residency during industrialization met the needs of many LGBTQA+ people who sought to loosen ties with their families and have increased proximity to people and resources, and was key to creating new sexual and social forms.[72] Elizabeth Canfield describes this relocation to metropolitan centers, and the subsequent structure of queer longing for metropolitan belonging, as "the geographic solution," where cities and urban space are "imagined to draw out and bind together nameless throngs of same-sex desiring and gender-variant people to build visibility and political power."[73] Critiquing the geographic solution, Johnson et al explain:

> The sentiment of urban enlightened and sexually free subjects creates an impasse that effectively tells rural LGBTQ-identifying people that they cannot be happily queer right where they are and should expect hostility- and in fact deserve it- if they do stay in their communities. This attitude toward rural queers produces sets of knowledge that ignore the dialectical relationship between queer desires within the spaces in which they occur and the ways they "mutually shape one another."[74]

Similar to M. Jacqui Alexander's critique of 'difference,'[75] rural culture is landlocked as 'then and there,' absent from the 'here and now' of the Western modernity that characterizes queerness as practice, identity, and futurity, in the urban imaginary. Preliminary scholarship in LGBTQA2S+ sexuality and community studies consequently focused on urban queer spaces like bathhouses, gay villages, gaybourhoods, and lesbian urban spaces as contestations of homonormativity.[76]

Despite recent attempts to 'include' rural queer voices, the cultural hierarchy of white queer urbanisms that privileges metropolitan centers as sites of idealized queerness has overshadowed the significance of rural-based identities and has both devalued, and erased,

---

[72] Browne and Brown, *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities.*
[73] Elizabeth Canfield, "Homonormativity and the Violence of the Geographic Solution," in *Queering Paradigms IV: South-North Dialogues on Queer Epistemologies, Embodiments and Activisms*, eds. Elizabeth Sara Lewis, Rodrigo Borba, Branca Falabella Fabricio, and Diana De Souza Pinto (Bern: Peter Lang, 2014), 244.
[74] Johnson, Gilley, and Gray, "Introduction," 14-15.
[75] Jacqui Alexander, *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2005).
[76] Browne and Brown, *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities.*

rural space.[77] Furthermore, while significant attention has been given to identity-based categories in rural studies, including lesbian, gay, and trans rural sexuality, and queer nationalisms,[78] research examining the politics of non/monogamous LGBTQA+ communities in Canada is almost exclusively metropolitan.

Set 'in the middle of nowhere' or situated as 'empty space,' studies and conceptualizations of rurality often fail to consider the complex religious, racial, and social relations that (re)produce the countryside, and in turn, (re)produce particular kinds of non-monogamies. Overall, these constructions of rurality have been argued as "integral to "the unique character of Canadian society"" and "closely linked to natural resource extraction, modes of production, remoteness, rurality and the north",[79] situating rural stereotypes as larger reflections of colonial and heteronormative nationhood. Consequently, for queer rural relationships, hetero-mononormative cultural pressures are amplified, as "the history of heterosexuality is linked to the biopolitical ambitions of the American state in these seemingly peripheral and remote spaces."[80]

Sarah Carter's important work on the diverse marital landscape of Western Canada for Indigenous, migrant, and Mormon groups amidst the gendered politics of late 19th century reform,[81] and Valerie Korenik's oral, archival, and cultural histories of queer urban and rural people in the prairies,[82] are reminders of how situating queer contemporary non/monogamies amidst the politics and identities specific to their region is especially important. Carter explains how Western Canada presented challenges to the agenda of Christian conjugality, as

[77] Baker, "Out Back Home," 29.
[78] Terry Goldie, *In a Queer Country: Gay and Lesbian Studies in the Canadian Context* (Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001).
[79] Baker, "Out Back Home," 30.
[80] Gabriel N. Rosenberg, "A Classroom in the Barnyard: Reproducing Heterosexuality in Inter-War American in Queering 4-H," in *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Studies*, eds. Mary L. Gray and Colin R. Johnson (New York & London: New York University Press, 2016), 91.
[81] Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).
[82] Korinek, *Prairie Fairies.*

the region was home to populations with multiple definitions of marriage, divorce, and sexuality— views that endangered convictions about the naturalness of the monogamous and nuclear family model. In Southern Alberta specifically, practices of polygamy from Mormon migrants in the 1880s, and Indigenous plural marriages, were the clearest example of those who challenged the monogamous ideal. Federal legislation was introduced to prohibit alternative marriages, and compulsory-attendance legislation for residential schools separated Indigenous children from their families and community leaders who continued to resist monogamy, despite threats of prosecution. Carter's work challenges two important myths: the idea that monogamy in what is now known as Canada is ancient and universal, and that colonialism was/is a stable and uncontested bourgeois project. Rather, monogamy was developed, substantiated, and affirmed here in contrast to the relationship alternatives perceived as threats to bourgeois respectability and the project of white settler nation-making.

Similarly, Valerie Korenik's *Prairie Fairies* purposefully decenters and challenges the heteronormative historiography of the prairie West, demonstrating that "queer social histories are not only urban, coastal, and metropolitan but also Midwestern and southern, rural and small town."[83] These social histories, mapped by Korenik in Winnipeg, Saskatoon, Regina, Edmonton, and Calgary, are uniquely characterized by patterns of cross-pollination, migration, and regional networking. Korenik complicates the "imagined prairies" through their histories of pride, empowerment, harassment, violence, and homophobia, as well as the history of gay liberationist activism, and the consciousness raising, education and human rights efforts that resisted the emergent "rights talk" and "equality seeking" shift in the mid-1980s.

The imaginary of Lethbridge, Alberta, as a small city situated on the periphery of "meaningful" queer existence, is challenged through Tiffany Muller Myrdahl's oral histories

[83] Korinek, *Prairie Fairies,* 7.

of queer women and mapping of queer spaces there, methods that she describes as counter-archives against the consensus of conservatism in Lethbridge: the "bible buckle" of the bible belt.[84] Muller Myrdahl states that while assumptions about the conservatism of small cities in Alberta are in many ways founded, particularly given the persistence of state-sanctioned queerphobia, these assumptions often function as a "red herring" that detracts from a nuanced and intersectional analyses of power in queer communities.[85]

Considering this, my research importantly moves beyond attempts to merely render queer lives *visible* in rural communities. By examining Lethbridge and surrounding towns as well as their specific histories, I begin to counteract exclusively metropolitan queer imaginaries, and the oversight of space as an 'empty container' for those who practice non/monogamy, calling specific attention to how Southern Alberta rurality, as a set of social and historical relations, animates negotiations of power and violence in non/monogamous communities.

1.1.4 Feminist Theorizations of Violence

Feminist scholars argue that over the past two decades there has been a growing and problematic alliance between the neoliberal state and the movement to end violence against women, "where the feminist campaign was modified and integrated into state and quasi-state organizations and became part of the routine business of social service bureaucracies and crime control."[86] Neoliberalism is a network of race and class based discourses, and an

[84] Myrdahl, "Ordinary (Small) Cities and LGBQ Lives;" Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, "Theatre Outré and Lessons from a Welcoming and Inclusive Community," in *Toward Equality and Inclusion in Canadian Cities: Lessons from Critical Praxis-Oriented Research*, eds. Fran Klodawsky, Janet Siltanen, and Caroline Andrew (McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017); Tiffany Muller Myrdahl, "Visibility on Their Own Terms? LGBTQ Lives in Small Canadian Cities," in *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, eds. Gavin Brown and Kath Browne (Abingdon: Routledge, 2016).
[85] Muller Myrdahl, "Ordinary (Small) Cities."
[86] Kristin Bumiller, *In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement Against Sexual Violence* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2008), 7; Lise Gotell, "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism on Neoliberal Terrain: The Garneau Sisterhood," in *Sexual Assault in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women's*

economic, social, and political vision of the world that prioritizes pro-corporate free-markets, encourages the privatization of services and individual rights and freedoms discourse, and moralizes self-governing citizens.[87] In this section I discuss literature that is concerned with the production of the heteronormative gender-based anti-violence movements through neoliberal discourse, and LGBTQA+ anti-violence responses that address, or do not address, these contexts.

Cindy Holmes discusses how heterosexual Intimate Partner Violence (IPV) was initially constructed as either a psychological problem or positioned within family systems discourse, where individual experiences were pathologized, and women were simultaneously blamed and victimized.[88] As a result, legal, scholarly, and frontline anti-violence interventions consistently utilize victim/perpetrator dichotomies, and "domestic," "relationship," or "intimate partner" as identifiers to describe a codified list of power-based behaviours. Second-wave feminist confessional strategies that "broke the silence" around the private and individualized framings of domestic abuse, and demanded public attention for the experiences of terror and humiliation they had felt at home, were complicated by race, class, and sexuality, especially as the first published accounts of abuse prior to the 1960s unified the experiences of women, insisted that money, region, age, and race were irrelevant.[89] Confessionals weren't (and still aren't) necessarily liberating,[90] especially for black and

Activism, ed. Elizabeth A. Sheehy (Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2012); Nancy Janovicek, *No Place to Go: Local Histories of the Battered Women's Shelter Movement* (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007); Beth Richie, *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation* (New York: New York University Press, 2012).

[87] Lisa Duggan, "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism," in *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, eds. Russ Castronovo and Dana Nelson (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002), 175–94.

[88] Cindy Holmes, "Troubling Normalcy: Examining Healthy Relationships Discourses in Lesbian Domestic Violence Prevention," in *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives*, ed. Janice Ristock (New York: Routledge, 2011).

[89] Richie, *Arrested Justice*.

[90] Gotell, "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism;" Kevin A. Patterson, *Love's Not Color Blind: Race and Representation in Polyamorous and Other Alternative Communities* (Portland, OR: Thorntree Press, 2018); Gotell, "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism."

Indigenous women who do not have access to the performance of diligent, fearful, femininity that grants white women access to good citizenship.[91]

Feminist historical accounts highlight how the emergence of the battered women's shelter movement and accompanying networks of non-hierarchical grassroots rape crisis centres initially operated independently from state resources, political in their address of class-based oppression, racial discrimination, and exploitation as root causes of violence amidst overarching gender inequality discourse.[92] However, as Richie explains in their chapter *How We Lost the Movement*, a widening divide between activists' increasing demands around structural intervention, and liberal feminist appeasements to conservative national, legislative, and local leadership resulted in a neoliberal erosion of feminist equality gains and the reassignment of the responsibility for managing the risk of rape to individual women.[93] Accordingly, to align with dramatic shifts in welfare policies, incarceration rates, and the surveillance role of social service bureaucracies, state power transformed relationship violence into a social, medical, and legal problem where violence against women is rationalized as chronic, yet treatable.[94] This dominant system of neoliberal risk management technologies, as Gotell describes, "attempt[s] to cultivate responsibilized, calculating, crime preventing citizens, who practice and sustain their autonomy by assembling information into personalized strategies that identify and minimize their exposure to harm."[95]

These neoliberal risk management technologies are replicated in popular literature and "how-to" guides for "Consensual Non-Monogamies," where consent is *currency*: a "sexual contract set up by free individuals."[96] While relationship contracts are drawn up to

[91] Gotell, "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism;" Richie, *Arrested Justice.*
[92] Janoviček, *No Place to Go*; Richie, *Arrested Justice.*
[93] Gotell, "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism."
[94] Bumiller, *In an Abusive State*.
[95] Gotell, "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism," 252.
[96] KelleyAnne Malinen, ed., *Dis/Consent: Perspectives on Sexual Consent and Sexual Violence (*Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2019), 34.

mitigate harm, they can be manipulated to obscure responsibility. In Klesse's inquiry into polyamory as 'revolutionary love' or a 'culture of privilege,' he contends how consent is contingent and always compromised by power imbalances between partners, especially given the tendency for poly communities to reproduce a culture of multiple privileges, namely around class and racialization.[97]

LGBTQ+ anti-violence programs tend to be organized as add-ons to heterosexual content, or outsourced to activist "special interest groups," antithetical to approaches where "public good" is defined in terms of restraint, privatization, and personal responsibility.[98] For example, Cindy Holmes has theorized how hegemonic discourses of neoliberalism, citizenship, homonormativity, and whiteness operate through the focus on "healthy relationships" discourse in lesbian domestic violence prevention, as part of a broader agenda for the anti-violence movement in North America.[99] According to Holmes, these "cost effective, innovative strategies" for building "capacity" and "resilience" promotes healthy neoliberal citizens who can better identify and manage their own health needs. As Holmes concludes: "while the normalizing discourses of [healthy relationships] workshops are affective at counteracting homophobic constructions of queer relationships as violent and pathological, they also render white and middle-class queer subjects complicit with processes of nation building."[100]

Reliance on "gender" as the root cause of violence in the anti-violence movement that early activists and women of colour pushed against continues to be complicated and resisted, as is the intention with this proposed research. Janice Ristock's Introduction to *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives* outlines the ways in which race and class construct

[97] Christian Klesse, "Poly Economics—Capitalism, Class, and Polyamory," *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 27, no. 2 (2014): 204, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-013-9157-4.
[98] Gotell, "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism."
[99] Holmes, "Troubling Normalcy."
[100] Holmes, "Troubling Normalcy," 213.

meaning and significance of the violence in LGBTQ relationships continues to be ignored. As well, concepts like "mutual abuse," reliant on the myth that women cannot harm each other, decontextualizes, downplays, and denies lesbian violence.[101]

The "gendered" root causes of violence are further complicated by queer and trans studies, like Nicole Brown's extensive work on partner abuse in trans communities[102]- research that communicates the tensions between victimization and perpetration, and the limitations of gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence. Often in relationships with queer or trans partners, Brown explains, a reluctance to reach out for abuse help, due to the risk of re-pathologizing and further abuse, humiliation, and criminalization for trans people, leads to "identity-based tactics" to explain abusiveness and manipulate investments in progressive politics to have them care for, and not leave, them. Participant's reports of guilt around transphobia, feelings of "owing" protection because of their greater social privilege, and not recognizing these patterns as "abuse," in part due to the view that their trans partners were "more oppressed," all challenge gender-based, heteronormative understandings of relationship violence in which the abusive person is the one with more social power.

Overall, this literature reveals the limitations of gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence that often render the forms of violence happening in queer communities incoherent, and invisible.

[101] Carrol Ann Marschner Smith, "Women Who Abuse their Female Intimate Partners: A Qualitative Study" (ProQuest Dissertation Publishing, 2006).
[102] Nicole Brown, "Holding Tensions of Victimization and Perpetration: Partner Abuse in Trans Communities," in *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives*, ed. Janice L. Ristock (New York: Routledge, 2011).

1.2 Theoretical Frameworks

1.2.1 Compulsory (Hetero)mononormativity

Pieper and Bauer coined the term *mononormativity* to refer to dominant assumptions of the normalcy and naturalness of monogamy.[103] Theoretical and terminological distinctions vary, but whether labelled mononormativity, monocentrism,[104] compulsory monogamy,[105] or heteronormative monogamy,[106] these concepts each name a system that establishes the hetero-monogamous coupling as natural, moral, and *better*. Indeed, feminist critiques have also examined the role of homophobia, biphobia, and compulsory heterosexuality in the production of monogamy as both inevitable and desirable.[107] Despite the desire to be separate from monogamous paradigms as much as possible, the relative similarities between monogamy and polyamory, and fear of stigma, continues to produce a discourse of "polynormativity." This is defined as the assumed and discursive standards about the ''right'' way to be polyamorous: couple-centered, love-based, and rule-regimented- arguably, standards derived from traditional monogamy.[108] These critiques of whiteness, monogamy, and heteronormativity in the production of non/monogamous subjects is comparable to such assumptions around heterosexuality inherent in the concept of "homonormativity." This concept is theorized by Lisa Duggan as a "new neo-liberal sexual politics" that hinges upon "the possibility of a demobilized gay constituency and a privatized, depoliticized gay culture

---

[103] Marianne Pieper, and Robin Bauer, "Polyamory and Mono-normativity: Results of an Empirical Study of Nonmonogamous Patterns of Intimacy." MS, Research Center for Feminist, Gender, and Queer Studies, (University of Hamburg, Hamburg, 2005).
[104] Curtis R. Bergstrand and Jennifer Blevins Sinski, *Swinging in America; Love, Sex, and Marriage in the 21st Century*. (Portland: Praeger, 2010).
[105] Elizabeth F. Emens, "Monogamy's Law: Compulsory Monogamy and Polyamorous Existence," *New York University Review of Law & Social Change* 29, no. 2 (2004): 277; Schippers, *Beyond Monogamy*; Willey, "'Christian Nations,' 'Polygamic Races' and Women's Rights."
[106] Melita J. Noel, "Progressive Polyamory: Considering Issues of Diversity," *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 602-620.
[107] Rich, "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence;" Willey, "'Christian Nations,' 'Polygamic Races' and Women's Rights."
[108] Ferrer, "Mononormativity."

anchored in domesticity and consumption."[109] Together, these theories indicate that spaces of queer rural non/monogamies may both contest dominant heteronormative forms, as well as uphold and sustain them.

Non/monogamies, as fantasies of queer difference, are still rewarded for approximating signs of straightness, monogamy, and heteronormative desire.[110] People practicing non/monogamies, while turning away from the 'happy object'[111] of monogamy, often turn toward the "less happy, but still happy, object of stable identity and community"[112] as well as the mononormative feeling rules that establish and animate them. Nathan Rambukkana, who uses the project of queer world-building laid out by Michael Warner, as well as Gayle Rubin's "charmed circle" of heteronormative culture[113] to ground his analysis, explores what he calls "poly-worldmaking" and "heterotopian space."[114] Heterotopian spaces, according to Rambukkana, can function to maintain the status quo rather than to deconstruct it, and function as privileged spaces of resistance. Acknowledging that "no site can be 'absolutely different'" the enclave of heterotopia is a space of both difference and homogeneity, "joined at the hip" with the affectual and political spaces that monogamy socializes.[115] Rambukkana addresses how, using the same tropes of possession and male dominance that many associate with monogamy, non/monogamies have the potential to stand as a form of "heteronormativity multiplied."[116]

As Barker et al describe, the "tensions between autonomy and possession...the ideals of finding 'the one' and the 'happily ever after' exist alongside those of personal growth and self-improvement,"[117] compounding into a trend of some relationships that are characterized

[109] Duggan, "The New Heteronormativity," 179.
[110] Sara Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion* (New York: Routledge, 2004).
[111] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*.
[112] Benson, "Tensions of Subjectivity," 31.
[113] Gayle Rubin, "Thinking Sex," *Square Peg* no. 10 (1985).
[114] Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies*, 115.
[115] Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies*, 119.
[116] Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies*, 15.
[117] Barker, Heckert, and Wilkinson, "Polyamorous Intimacies," 192.

by open negotiation and ethical treatment, but echoed with prevailing notions of monogamous coupling, self-worth, longevity, and romance. That monogamous ideals become transferred normatively into non/monogamous contexts has been theorized alongside the concept of "polyromanticism,"[118] where the political potentials of polyamory are abstracted and romanticized to reach the top of a new sexual hierarchy.[119] Examining "mono-poly wars," two pairs of interlocked psychosocial attitudes—monopride/polyphobia and polypride/monophobia, Ferrer mediates the predicament of mutual competition between monogamy and non/monogamy in the context of Western mononormative culture, ultimately calling for research frameworks that work outside of the universalizing hierarchies between monogamy and non/monogamies.[120]

These concepts, which resonate with Sara Ahmed's analysis of 'alien affect,' explore the myth that heterosexuality and queerness exist in parallel worlds. In fact, "they touch."[121] As Ahmed insists, "compulsory heterosexuality shapes one's own body, *as a congealed history of past approaches.*"[122] Exploring the ways these normativities touch, congeal, regenerate, and are resisted, is especially important to this research, which I will elaborate on further in the next section.

1.2.2 Intersectionality

Intersectionality as both a critical power analytic and a social justice praxis[123] is used to apprehend complex architectures of power and oppression. As Collins and Bilge define:

> Race, class, gender, sexuality, dis/ability, ethnicity, nation, religion, and age are categories of analysis, terms that reference important social divisions. But they are also categories that gain meaning from power relations of racism, sexism,

[118] Wilkinson, "What's Queer about Non-Monogamy."
[119] Rubin, "Thinking Sex."
[120] Ferrer, "Mononormativity."
[121] Sara Ahmed, *The Promise of Happiness*. (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010), 156.
[122] Ahmed, *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*, 145.
[123] Silma Bilge, "Theoretical Coalitions and Multi-Issue Activism: 'Our Struggles Will Be Intersectional or They Will Be Bullshit!'" in *Decolonizing Sexualities: Transnational Perspectives, Critical Interventions*, eds. Sandeep Bakshi, Suhraiya Jivraj, and Silvia Posocco (Oxford: Counterpress, 2016).

> heterosexism, and class exploitation...Of critical consideration are the ways in which intersections of age, (dis)ability, class, poverty, gender and sexual identity, religion, geographical (dis) location, rurality, colonialism/ imperialism, racialization, citizenship are enmeshed in a process of social justice and injustice.[124]

With an intersectional approach, researchers seek to attend to how these categories and domains of power, which are inseparable, irreducible, and context specific, are organized, managed, legitimized, contested, and subverted.

Kimberlé Crenshaw's work, grounded in law as a site of repression and social justice, "coined" the term intersectionality in *Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence against Women of Color,*[125] which is most often cited as intersectionality's point of origin. However, the core ideas of intersectionality were developed in the 1960's and 1970's by women of colour who felt the tensions of gender, race, and class segregation within civil rights, Black Power, Chicano liberation, Red Power, and Asian-American movements.[126] Black feminists in the US expressed intersectional analyses in political pamphlets, poetry, early texts such as *The Black Woman*[127] and *Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female,*[128] and later, groundbreaking texts like *A Black Feminist Statement*[129] that focused on the systematic and interlocking oppressions of racism, patriarchy, and capitalism, as well as heterosexism and homophobia. Alice Walker, Angela Davis, Nikki Giovanni, Barbara Smith, and other important figures brought their lived experiences with social movements to the academy, utilizing the dual streams of black feminism and race/class/gender studies.

Despite this history, black feminist's initial vision for intersectionality to generate

---

[124] Patricia Hill Collins and Silma Bilge, *Intersectionality* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016), 7.
[125] Kimberle Crenshaw, "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color," *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-1299, https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039.
[126] Hill Collins and Bilge, *Intersectionality*.
[127] Toni Cade Bambara, *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, (Washington Square Press, 2005 [1970]).
[128] Frances Beal, *Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female*, (Radical Education Project, 1969).
[129] Combahee River Collective, "A Black Feminist Statement," *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 42, no.3-4 (2014[1978]): 271-280.

counter-hegemonic and transformative knowledge production, activism, pedagogy, and non-oppressive coalitions is usually bypassed, and intersectionality has been systematically depoliticized, whitened, and confined to academic exercise. In particular, as Bilge discusses, the decentering of the constitutive role of race has made intersectionality more palatable to white-dominated gender studies departments and universities, where, "ornamental," it has been "commodified and colonized for neoliberal regimes.[130] Bilge elaborates:

> Framing social life not as collective, but as the interaction of individual social entrepreneurs, neoliberalism denies preconditions leading to structural inequalities; in consequence, it congratulates itself for dismantling policies and discrediting movements concerned with structures of injustice. Thus neoliberal assumptions create the conditions allowing the founding conceptions of intersectionality- as an analytical lens and political tool for fostering a radical social justice agenda- to become diluted, disciplined, and disarticulated.[131]

For this research, understanding and resisting the power structures that are being reproduced in the misuse and appropriation of intersectionality is important, especially as collaborators cite social difference and identity-based politics as contributing to their experiences of violence in queer spaces, and queer non/monogamous relationships.

In her blog, *The Critical Polyamorist*, Kim TallBear discusses the importance of *re-aggregating* relations in a settler culture that turns "sexuality" into an object, as opposed to a set of relations in which power circulates. This transformation of relations into "things" makes them more resourceful "for the settler state to measure, monitor, and exploit to in complex ways build settler knowledge and national identity."[132] Other important scholarship has delineated queerness as a process of racialization, conditioned by and intimately relational to settler colonialism.[133] As Morgensen describes, "modern sexuality comes into

---

[130] Sirma Bilge, "Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies," *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10, no. 2 (2013): 407, https://doi.org/10.1017/s1742058x13000283.
[131] Bilge, "Intersectionality Undone," 407.
[132] TallBear, "Yes, Your Pleasure!"
[133] David L. Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy* (Durham: Duke University Press, 2010); Scott Lauria Morgensen, *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011); Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*.

existence when the heteropatriarchal advancement of white settlers appears to vanquish sexual primitivity, which white settlers nevertheless adopt as their own history."[134] This process of vanishing, violence, and appropriation is seen in the context of Western Canada through many histories, including Sarah Carter's accounts of enforced Christian conjugality through residential schools, federal legislation, prosecution, and a range of other violences against native non/monogamies.[135]

In defining "Queer Liberalism," David.L.Eng describes how, unmoored from its origins as a political movement, queer "has come to demarcate more narrowly pragmatic gay and lesbian identity and identity politics, the economic interests of neoliberalism and whiteness, and liberal political norms of inclusion,"[136] a development critiqued earlier by José Esteban Muñoz in his theorizing of gay pragmatism and queer futurity.[137] Indeed, Eng insists that queer liberalism explicitly opposes the politics of intersectionality and the co-constitution of race and sexuality, re-focusing critical attention to private structures of family and kinship through rhetorics of colour-blindness, and transformative multiculturalism.

Similar to TallBear's earlier critique of the assumptions of whiteness and class that produce Solo Poly as the most acceptable form of non/monogamy, Jasbir Puar notes how "the benevolence toward sexual others is contingent upon ever-narrowing parameters of white racial privilege, consumption capabilities, gender and kinship normativity, and bodily integrity."[138] It is clear that whiteness is both assumed and absolved in the spaces and politics of queerness as well as queer theory, and, as many scholars of non/monogamies have argued, non/monogamies are no exception, particularly as communities navigate the lingering and

[134] Morgensen, *Spaces between Us*, 1.
[135] Sarah Carter, *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915* (Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008).
[136] Eng, *The Feeling of Kinship*, xi.
[137] José Esteban Muñoz, "Queerness as Horizon: Utopian Hermeneutics in the Face of Gay Pragmatism," in *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity* (New York: New York University Press, 2009).
[138] Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages*, xii.

productive structures of settler colonialism and heteropatriarchy. Due to the highly racialized language that privileges polyamory as the most civilized, respectable form of non/monogamy,[139] critiques of neoliberalism in both our formations of intimacy and approaches to anti-violence, as well as the prevalence of white, middle class practitioners of non/monogamy in recent scholarship, this research seeks to put sexuality, race, settler colonialism, class, and capitalism, and other intersections, "in good relation"[140] with LGBTQA+ non/monogamies in Lethbridge, holding "non/monogamies" accountable to their multiple co-constituting relations of power.

Intersectionality, Settler Sexuality, and Queer Liberalism are all analytics of power that are used throughout this research to situate the PhotoVoice stories told by collaborators, the broader community wherein this research takes place, as well as those stories unseen, unheard, or outside of the scope of this research. The following chapter teases at these analytics of power by considering how this research was designed, felt, contested, and participated in.

[139] Rambukkana, *Fraught Intimacies*.
[140] TallBear, "Yes, Your Pleasure!"

Chapter Two:

PhotoVoice: Design, Collaboration, and Co-Curation

I employed PhotoVoice, a visual participatory action methodology, to address my research questions: What are the prevailing narratives of violence within queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge, Alberta, and in what ways do these narratives challenge or sustain conventional gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence? This methodology allowed for an exploration of the complexity of violence as it is lived, represented, and (re)defined in the context of queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge. Based on a series of creative prompts around the historical, institutional, and social conditions of non/monogamies that shape violence in their lives, seven research participants engaged in a process of storytelling through photography. Following a co-curatorial interview about this process, they critically discussed the resulting images, and, through a process of group consensus and curation, communicated their perspectives and desires for change with community stakeholders through an exhibit.

The visual and participatory approach offered by PhotoVoice was instrumental in reconceptualizing and making meaning from the complexities of violence in their lives and their communities; in particular, the ways in which image-based storytelling challenged the role of language in facilitating and constraining the (un)speakability of violence. Allowing for the possibility of existence beyond survival, the collaborators' PhotoVoice bring awareness to both serious *and* playful forms of queer knowledge production. Their photographs invoke images of power, pleasure, and pain, and reconsider discourses of risk and vulnerability as well as the surprises and demands of labour when doing participatory anti-violence research.

In this chapter I first introduce PhotoVoice as a participatory research method, including the potentials and challenges for visual pedagogy as a scene of political struggle. I

then provide an in-depth discussion of the design and facilitation of the five stages of the participatory research process: Initial Meetings, Taking Photographs, Co-Curations, Group Curation, and an Exhibit. Lastly, I communicate the complexity of research relationships within my own community, and reflect on PhotoVoice for anti-violence research, as well as the constraints of "participation." This chapter intentionally troubles the dichotomous relationship between "design" and "results," interspersing commentary, imagery, and performance, in-between notes on production, asking all readers and collaborators to change our relationship to procedure, containment, and order.

2.1 Photo Voice as Participatory Action Research

Feminist Participatory Action Research (PAR) is an umbrella term for research that is decentered, conflicted, and committed to negotiation, characterized by promoting collective processes of inquiry, mutually dependent and cooperative relationships, and social change. Researchers and participants work together as co-researchers or collaborators, participating in research design and inquiry that supports making meaningful social change in their lives. This approach explicitly challenges the emotional, political, and social consequences of practices and discourses of positivist data extraction, ultimately making important shifts from viewing communities as *objects* of inquiry to *directors* of inquiry.[141] Jessica Fields describes a queer feminist understanding of participatory knowledge production as the scene of political struggle committed to the generative possibilities of the messiness of social life, where "insight emerges not with answers to questions or the settling of uncertainties but from collaborators' struggle to know and be known in our complex personhood."[142]

As a type of PAR methodology, PhotoVoice is a method whereby collaborators are given cameras and asked to take photos of their daily experiences. It is based on three

[141] Fields, "The Racialized Erotics of Participatory Research," 37.
[142] Fields, "The Racialized Erotics of Participatory Research," 37.

theoretical frameworks: Freirean concepts of education for critical consciousness, feminist conceptions of knowledge, and community-based approaches to photography.[143] PhotoVoice is an cross-disciplinary methodology, initially popular in fields like Public Health, where communities talk through pictures, using photo-texts, photo-narratives, novellas, and other visual pedagogy, to map assets for community development projects, document experiences around topics like health disparities, humanitarian disasters, and stories of resistance and survivorship. As vehicles for communication, collaborators in PhotoVoice are able to engage viewers as witnesses to specific spatial locations, transform normative discourse, and act as both invitations and invocations of the meaning-making that locates community priorities at historical and political moments.[144]

While PhotoVoice has many strengths, the complexities of its use are beginning to be elaborated. Importantly, PhotoVoice has been critiqued as a disciplinary apparatus for its potential to recreate community stereotypes and provoke hostility in communities that are already highly surveilled. In particular, when PhotoVoice's participatory elements are presented as a set of techniques, such as photography, rather than as a commitment to working *with* communities, it may result in the reproduction, rather than the challenging, of unequal power relations. The emancipatory intentions of "uncovering silenced voices," confessional, multivoiced, or personal narrative projects all share the assumption that voices prove the *realness* of the work, a critique taken up by anti-colonial scholars,[145] as well as in Joan Scott's unpacking of the use of "experience" as an unquestioned basis for analysis.[146] Within these broader conversations, power-based analyses of hypervisibility and invisibility

[143] Alix Holtby et al., "To Be Seen or Not to Be Seen: Photovoice, Queer and Trans Youth, and the Dilemma of Representation," *Action Research* 13, no. 4 (December 2015): 318, https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750314566414.
[144] Caroline C. Wang, "Photovoice: A Participatory Action Research Strategy Applied to Women's Health." *Journal of Women's Health* 8, no. 2 (1999): 185-192, https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.1999.8.185.
[145] Carla Rice et al., "Re/turning the Gaze: Unsettling Settler Logics through Multimedia Storytelling," *Feminist Media Studies* (2020): 9, https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1707256.
[146] Joan W. Scott, "The Evidence of Experience," *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773-97. Accessed April 7, 2017, 773-797, http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343743.

politics, as well as burdens and dilemmas of representation where marginalized narratives must be made palatable and legible for mainstream audiences, are being increasingly discussed in feminist applications of visual participatory research.[147]

However, the same studies also suggest that these power-based concessions are met hand in hand with the important potentials of this methodology, particularly possibilities for subverting dominant conceptions of queer and trans lives,[148] and exploring unofficial and normatively (re)produced meanings around sexuality. In this way, feminist approaches to PAR have been described as "capturing the embodied and material manifestations of sexuality which can be difficult to articulate and uncover through written or talk-based methods."[149] Markedly different from the 'testimonial performances' that are often deployed in scholarship and activism of past and ongoing violence, participatory methods like PhotoVoice can add nuance to victim/hero dichotomies, and evoke the polyvocality and multi-temporality that power-based analyses and interventions require.[150] As David Marshall summarizes, "collaborative, place-based stories situate individuals in their broader social environments and temporal contexts, and seek to make sense of events through a range of affective registers."[151]

A participatory method felt right for this research, as my thesis arose from the emotional and intellectual spaces that were already being formed with the friends, relationships, and communities that I was a part of. PhotoVoice, in particular, seemed to be a good first creative step in generating queer anti-violence research that brought intention to the seeing, feeling, thinking, observing, experiencing, wanting, acting, and loving, involved in

[147] Holtby et al., "To Be Seen or Not to Be Seen."
[148] Holtby et al., "To Be Seen or Not to Be Seen."
[149] Louisa Allen, "'Picture This': Using Photo-Methods in Research on Sexualities and Schooling," *Qualitative Research* 11, no. 5 (October 2011): 488, https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111413224.
[150] Allen, "'Picture This,'" 488.
[151] David J. Marshall et al., "Narrating Palimpsestic Spaces," *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 49, no. 5 (May 2017): 1164, https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518x17690531.

stories centring relationships. While Jessica Fields articulates that we cannot count on a "better" or "shiny new method" to bring us closer to inclusiveness, accuracy, or ease, or tame the unruliness and unpredictability demanded from feminist research, she does state that "research practices central to participatory models hold the potential to disrupt disenfranchising practices of learning even as they require us to navigate risk, betrayal, desire, and violence."[152] Building from this, I also chose PhotoVoice as a method to incorporate both individual and collective ways of processing and communicating complex topics, as well as for its emphasis on possibility, intervention, and future-oriented action, particularly in response to the neoliberal appropriation of anti-violence movements that has relegated responsible anti-violence measures to individuals, the state, and quasi-independent NGOs.

2.2 Research Design

2.2.1 Recruitment: Calling all Collaborators!

Potential collaborators were recruited based on the following five criteria: Must identify as LGBTQA2S+; Must be over the age of 18; Must practice/have practiced non/monogamies; Must live in or near Lethbridge, Alberta; and, finally, must have also experienced violence as a part of these relationships. "Violence" was self-determined by the collaborators as part of an initial inquiry into their prevailing narratives of violence but was discussed throughout the project as any kind of power-based, controlling, or coercive behaviours, including: physical, emotional, psychological, sexual, and financial abuse. While this definition includes explicit behaviour such as force, humiliation, manipulation, and neglect, it also includes any connections to homophobia, racism, transphobia, ableism, and other kinds of systemic power dynamics between partners. Non/monogamy has been

[152] Fields, "The Racialized Erotics of Participatory Research," 46.

identified by researchers of non/monogamies as a relationship practice, philosophy, theory, lovestyle, relationship orientation, relationship identity, sexual orientation, and even a 'hard wired,' durable disposition, which deeply informs a sense of selfhood. Because of these varying interpretations, and the desire for this research to queer the idea of a 'non/monogamous subject,' the decision to include *past* non/monogamous relationships was kept intentionally flexible.

To recruit collaborators, I circulated a research poster (Appendix C) through listservs, membership lists, newspapers, and social networks at the University of Lethbridge and Lethbridge College, with help from Faculty Administrators, and Directors from groups such as: the Campus Women's Centre; International Student's Centre; Indigenous Centre; Uleth Campus Pride; Departments of Gender Studies, Sociology, Geography, Psychology, Anthropology, History, and Political Science; Faculties of Health Sciences, and the Dhillon School of Business; Student Unions, and clubs such as the Women of Colour Club and the Pride Lounge. Emails and Facebook posts were also circulated by groups in the community to membership lists and follower audiences, including but not limited to: Lethbridge Public Library; Lethbridge Pride; Lethbridge Senior Pride; OUTreach Southern Alberta Society, a regional queer resource group; Didi's Playhaus/Theatre Outre, a local queer theatre group; and individuals who expressed interest in promoting the research. The research poster was *not* circulated to the *Fetlife: Polyamory and Open Relationships* group nor on dating apps, due to my personal experiences with gendered harassment, and so as not to generate confusing sets of power dynamics within and between research intentions and sexual or romantic interest. However, as part of a larger support network of researchers, and with the additional support of an advertisement budget, this would have been an incredibly valuable and targeted recruitment strategy to pursue, as it is clear from my own experience in this community that non/monogamous people in Lethbridge communicate frequently through

those platforms.

My attempts to recruit BIPOC collaborators were relatively unsuccessful, despite intentional conversations with individual people, International Associations and Indigenous/BIPOC groups. I suspect that this is in large part due to the whiteness of my own identity, as well as the whiteness centered in the language, politics, and literature of non/monogamies, and healthy relationships discourses for LGBTQA2S+ violence prevention.[153]

In addition to recruiting BIPOC collaborators, I also faced other recruitment challenges. For example, one person, Sloan, decided not to participate, but consented to me including the notes from our initial meeting conversation, where we discussed negotiating individuality, agency, choice, and consent, in her quad. Sloan was in a quad, where four people compose a primary partnership, with her husband and one other couple. While she was on her way to meet with me, two of her partners expressed concern over being labelled the "violent partner." In order to work through these concerns, we discussed: the political impulses of the project, in particular, the rejection of victim/perpetrator dichotomies; how Sloan could be involved regardless of their consent, and focus on experiences outside of their quad; or how all four partners could take photos, interview, and curate together, adding notes to each other's photos, or creating a unified set from their collective experiences. While she was excited about the possibility of some of these adaptations, there was a strong potential for unease and emotional backlash were she to participate, and she ultimately respected her partners feelings as inextricable from her own.

My encounter with Sloan was admittedly difficult, and I vacillated between the disappointment around her non-involvement, feeling protective of her, and trusting what she

[153] Holmes, "Troubling Normalcy."

needed from our encounter. While I don't know the details of her experiences, Sloan and her partner's concerns speak to broader challenges and insecurities around non/monogamous representation in research, and the care required to adequately represent mistakes, growth, and even violence, in the context of anti-violence stereotypes. More than this, Sloan's withdrawal demonstrates the difference in *work* between collaborators in previous versus current relationships with potential violence, and the challenges to participation this can mean for all collaborators involved.

2.2.2 "Capturing" Identity: The Traces of Collaborator Demographics

Collectively, as part of assembling the zine[154] over an online communication platform, collaborators describe themselves as seven people from the Lethbridge queer community, who are practicing a form of non/monogamy and have a story to share about conceptualizing, experiencing, and resisting violence in this context. They are aged 21-36, and all navigate life differently: as students, sex workers, community organizers, musicians, artists, and survivors.[155] Table 1: "Collaborator Demographics" also represents key demographic information about the collaborators:

[154] I go into detail about the zine Collaborators and I produced throughout the rest of this chapter.
[155] PhotoVoice Collaborators, *Exhibit Zine: Who We Are*, 2.

Table 1: Collaborator Demographics

Pseudonym	Age	Gender	Sexuality	Ethnicity	Type(s) of Non/Monogamy	Type(s) of Violence
Bear	32	Non-Binary Trans	Pansexual /Panromantic	"mixed" British/ Chilean	Polyamory	Gaslighting, Verbal, Police Neglect Kink Assault
Quiet	23	Non-Binary	Pansexual /Panromantic	White	Polyamory	Sexual Assault Police Neglect Gendered Queerphobic Slurs
Joe	36	Cis Male	Questioning	White	Polyamory	Primary/Secondary Gendered Fears Harming Others
Lily	21	Non-Binary Trans Woman	Queer/ Lesbian/Sapphic	White	Budding Romance Sexual-Platonic N-M	Sexual Assault Robbery Fears Harming Others
Jingle	21	Genderfluid	Pansexual	White	Polyamory Mono-Poly	Sexual Assault
Simon	23	Demi-man	Queer Androsexual	White	N-M	Gaslighting, Financial
Tate	21	Non-Binary	Queer	White	N-M	Self-harm, Gendered Capitalism, Spatial

This table was produced not as a way for readers to make generalizations or categorical assumptions, but to instead give context through the ways collaborators self-identify as well as demonstrate both the playfulness and frustration around processes of self-identification. Collaborators were informed about how demographic information would be used for this research and were asked to specifically record words during the interview that would be used to describe their identities, relationships, and experiences. Most were recorded at the beginning of the interview, and others arose and were clarified during conversation. For example, a collaborator would describe an experience of violence, and I would ask what word or label they were comfortable using to describe that experience, following which they would clarify "assault," "violence," "neglect," another descriptor, or a longer more contextual

sentence. While three collaborator's identified class, work precarity, and socioeconomic background that were integral to their experiences of violence in non/monogamous contexts, others left out these details, therefore, I chose not to include socioeconomic status in Table 1.

Although a useful snapshot, this table neglects the voice and intention with which collaborators described themselves. Bear, for example, gives rich and personalized description through what they call their "elevator pitch on socioeconomic background":

> So I'm 32 years old, I identify as non-binary trans, they/them pronouns. I identify as being mixed race, although I can be visually seen as white. I'm the son of an international refugee from a prisoner of war from the 70s, as well as the son of someone who moved here from Montréal, originally from Britain. Very much a first generation Canadian. I grew up very lower class, informed by those backgrounds of my parents. I'm pan and poly, pansexual and panromantic, with inclinations towards masc presenting, while definitely staying away from hyper masc and hyper femme.

Some collaborators both wrestle with and enjoy how "being queer, you always hate the limitations of language," like Lily, who felt certainty around words like "survivor," "neurodivergent," and the political representation of "sapphic," yet referenced their struggle with affirming romantic hierarchies through the *many loves* implication of "polyamory:"

> for me non-monogamies don't entail love, and I don't like calling...I feel wrong to call people who have specifically set a boundary of non-romantic interests, to call them a polyamorous partner. That feels like I'm violating a boundary almost. So, I prefer non-monogamies because it captures that...often I just call people "friends" which I suppose someone from the outside could find that confusing- that I have friends who I don't sleep with and some that I do (both laugh).

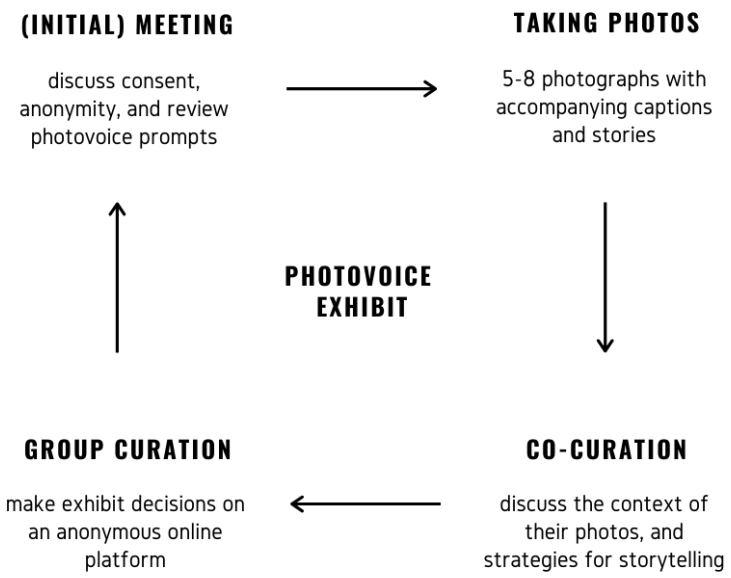
Lily's definitional process encompasses not only their own political and intimate desires, but those of the people they have intimate relationships with. Furthermore, collaborators like Simon admitted to using labels like "gay" as opposed to "demi-man" with researchers and non-queer communities, elaborating: "I am a demi-man, and I identify as gay because that's easier than going into what my sexuality actually is. Probably a better term would be queer or androsexual...even that still feels really limiting," demonstrating not only the limits of language, but also collaborators' intentional use of different words in different contexts. As

Joe critiques: “cis dominant communities...require more concrete definitions of “why” or “how” if they are to accept these ideas.” Ultimately, this process solidified how practices of demography are *not disinterested,* and there must be methodological rigor invested in representing the tentative, hesitant, and unfolding facets of language and identity. Making visible this definitional process and complicating categories is more methodologically *accurate,* as well as politically *necessary,* as collaborators in queer community straddle a desire to be vocal, whilst resisting researcher impulses to capture, define, and make knowable the expansive networks of existing in queer identity and space.

2.2.3 ~~Research Procedures~~ Research Process

While PhotoVoice is often facilitated as a one-day group workshop, I created and adapted certain processes in order to better answer the primary research questions, and address power-based concerns that the collaborators raised during the initial stages of the research. Specifically, *Initial Meetings, Taking Photographs,* and *Co-Curations* were individualized with each collaborator, and extensive efforts to maintain anonymity within the group were negotiated and encouraged throughout the *Group Curation,* as well as the *Exhibit.* PhotoVoice adaptations, particularly for anonymity, were undertaken in order to resist the requirement for collaborators to be “out” as either LGBTQA+ or non/monogamous in order to be involved. This was especially necessary due to the close-knit aspects LGBTQA+ non/monogamous lives in rural cities, including shared resources and partners, as well as disclosures of violence. Each stage of the participatory process, originally designed as a series of linear steps, was revisited and reconsidered, sometimes by individual collaborators, and sometimes as a group.

Table 2: **Participatory Process**



a) Initial Meeting

Before any photography took place, I met with collaborators individually to get to know each other, discuss the goals of the project, and begin the process of informed consent. This conversation was grounded, in large part, by our shared sense of community, as well as the PhotoVoice Prompts (Appendix B) that I had created ahead of time. The main prompt was designed to provide a sense of structure and direction, while opening up a space for their own experiences and creative direction:

> Think about key memories or feelings that characterize your non/monogamous relationships, particularly in relation to how violence was experienced, how it felt, how you understood and processed it, and how you navigated it with partners and your community. What places, objects, scenes, and settings represent these feelings for you? What story do you want to tell with the photograph(s)?

Follow up questions, which collaborators were encouraged to stick to as much or as little as they wanted, included questions like: "What does power look like in your relationships?" and "How does the gender/race/class/ability of you and your partners affect how you approach

concerns of safety, boundaries, and violence?" The final guideline encouraged them to prepare for our interview together by describing what's happening in their pictures and reflecting on their motivations, as well as the meaning their photos hold for them in terms of violence, their relationships, and their community. Collaborators kept a paper and digital copy of these guidelines to help them prepare their photographs. Simon describes their response to these prompts, as shown in this exchange:

> Jaisie: Just out of curiosity, how did you find these prompts? Did you draw on them a lot or not, or did you find anything particularly helpful, or was it all medium, I don't know?
>
> Simon: Um, I looked at the prompts, but through the process of taking pictures I guess I didn't follow what they said. I think I would be able to answer all of these questions with the photos I took and our conversation too. I think looking at the demographic, the prompts were really relevant for my story, and the questions about communication and boundaries… the first prompt is the most relevant for me, and I'm sure others will have more that are more relevant for them.

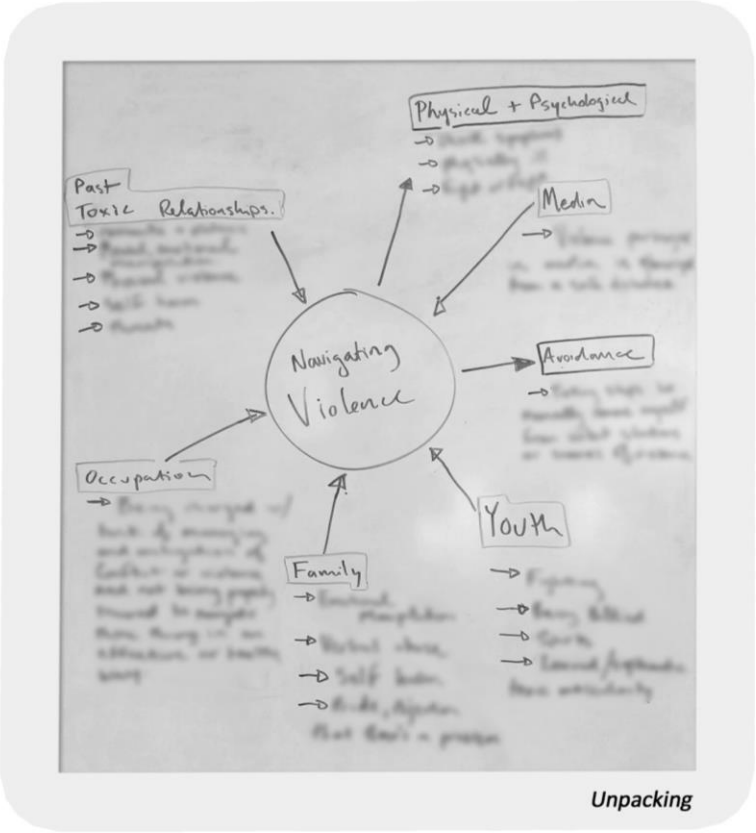
The initial meetings were full of possibilities, creativity, and insecurities for everyone involved. I found myself reassuring collaborators that this research was *not* positioning non/monogamies and violence as correlational, yet I was surprised how much this reassurance was for my own benefit. In large part, this reassurance was unnecessary due to the questions they each asked me about my research motivations, which lead to discussions about my own experiences navigating power and violence in contexts of non/monogamies and trying to make space for these conversations, while still resisting compulsory (hetero)monogamy and non/monogamies stigma. Collaborators also initiated discussions around: the possibilities and limitations around consent regarding the involvement of their other partners in a group Photovoice activity, and how much agency they had in adapting the prompts to suit their own situations; genuine concerns about police or state affiliations due to the reporting requirements outlined in the letter of consent; creative and curatorial impulses, asking questions like "who will our main audience be?," and their initial ideas for

photography; the qualifications of violence, i.e. uncertainty what violence means, how it is being defined, and if they relate to it; and, finally, expressing their desire for further involvement, or pushing the research further. Several collaborators expressed that they would like to help recruit other people, and one suggested directions we could take the research after the exhibit, including a locally printed photo-book, which resulted in the creation of our Exhibit Zine.

b) Taking Photographs: Visual Pedagogy, and "Reframing the Space"

Jaisie: So, you're figuring out how to tell this story?
Quiet: Yeah, like how do you capture that?

Following our initial meetings, over the course of 14 days, each collaborator was asked to visually capture their 'voice' by taking five to eight medium to high resolution digital photographs and developing accompanying descriptive captions in written form. These would then be explored discursively through participatory dialogue in a semi-structured interview and the group curation process. Although alternative cameras were offered, collaborators had access to their own preferred camera or smartphone camera to take photographs of spaces, places, events or experiences that represent their understanding and imagining of violence and non/monogamies. Thus, the gaze of the cameras was intended to be systemic and directive, with each person taking photographs of what they wanted other people to see and to think about. Unlike other PhotoVoice models, photo quality and composition were not required for this project, but digitization was important for being able to use the photos in a variety of platforms and contexts. Joe's photo, "Unpacking" can be seen below as an example of what collaborators developed:



This map is an example of the types of cerebral unpacking I do to try to better understand situations, people, and my environment. My relationship to violence has changed very much since I was a youth, but I'm starting to better understand what I've brought with me along the way. For instance, being the victim of a past emotionally abusive relationship, I know that I harbor insecurities about what my partner is going to think, or how they will react to my thoughts or feelings on various topics, especially in a situation where my anxiety is already heightened and I am vulnerable. This deeply affects my ability to communicate, which is a crucial element of a polyamorous relationship. Anyone can be a perpetrator of violence, and the resulting ripple effect creates shared trauma.

Fig 2: "Unpacking" (Joe)

The cerebral unpacking that Joe describes mirrors the process of photography itself, since, as Bear articulates, the process involves, "reframing the space I'm in so I'm more aware of the things that follow you and are around you." As Bain et al. distinguish, renderings in arts-based methodologies are "not procedures or recommended modes of inquiry, but rather ... provisional opportunities for rewriting research through text and visual images at the intersection of knowing and being."[156] Accordingly, each collaborator developed their own methodology for this stage of the research, often taking directive from a particular emotion or impulse, as Tate demonstrates after being asked to describe the experience of taking photographs:

> I started off having no idea. I remember when we had our first meeting I was like "what violence are we even trying to… I don't get beat up, I don't know" But then I started to think… I started taking pictures of "where are the places that relationships

[156] Alison L. Bain, William Payne, and Jaclyn Isen, "Rendering a Neighbourhood Queer," *Social & Cultural Geography* 16, no. 4 (2015): 428, https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2014.991750.

> have made me cry in Lethbridge?" That's something I really started with. Once I did that it started to come along.

Additionally, as Lily comments:

> My method, I suppose, was...I take a lot of photos, and when those feelings arise when I'm laying there, and I start to feel at peace, or at dissonance, or anxious, I go like "this is a point to capture" because there are things that are environmentally triggering this, and that's the way the pictures were taken.

Other collaborators, like Quiet, found it difficult to visualize, or make tangible, memories and feelings that were still (re)forming:

> It was really difficult! I struggled with what to take pictures of. I have seven pictures so far but only five with captions. I have another idea about what I want to take a photo to like represent something, else but I like have no idea what visually would even represent that. It's hard. I think putting like a visual image to like a description or like an emotion or like something I'd never really even like conceptualized in a verbal or actual tangible way it was just sort of like a sense you have about your life or like your something. Some of the things like I hadn't really acknowledged in the way they were. I hadn't examined some of my experiences. So, some of it was difficult, coming to understand things that have happened in a new way.

Everyone involved held space for the nonlinearity of this process, embracing uncertain impulses and actions, as Simon explained: "some of the pictures I took I didn't even know why I went to take them, but they are very important to me, I know that."

I also resisted the anticipated neatness of a "research procedure," and encouraged thoughtful adaptation, quickly accepting a variety of versions of photographs, and shaking my expectations of a 14-day production period. For example, Simon originally chose Figure 3: *Version 1* to represent a memory about kink-shaming and sexual assault with one of their ex-partners Omega, but, after several weeks of contemplation, chose to photograph and include Figure 4: "Version 2," expressing the complexity, embodiment, and reclamation that went hand in hand with the painful parts of those memories. In their words, "I wonder if there's a better way to express the sexual tension, just because there's so much more than just lube involved. It comes back to abuse, and also invalidation of identity too."

Fig 3: "Version 1" (Simon)

Fig 4: "Version 2" (Simon)

This generative and attentive process is demonstrated again by Lily, who created Figure 5: "Avoidance-Unacknowledgement-Stepping Over It," and spoke through their caption:

> This bra discarded after the hookup described in "A Night of Safety" sat on the floor for weeks in my kitchen. I kept stepping over it. I don't want to touch what lies there. The memory that now lives in that bra. What will it make me think of if I pick it up again? Shame? That I perhaps navigated that encounter the wrong way? In a way that reopened trauma? Or created it? So many questions and fears lie in these dirty clothes.

Weeks later, they seemingly acknowledged their doubts and insecurities about a night of safe intimacy, by picking up and washing the body paint from their lingerie, a process visually captured in Figure 6: "Washing Out a Skeleton."

Fig 5: "Avoidance-Unacknowledgement-Stepping Over It" (Lily)

Fig 6: "Washing Out a Skeleton" (Lily)

Collaborator methodology, playing with both feeling and audience, feels close to José Esteban Muñoz's conceptualization of ecstatic time, experienced when "the feelings the speaker feels and remembers is not consigned to one moment...it steps out from the past and remarks on the unity of an expansive version of temporality."[157] The unpredictable spaces of meaning making at this stage of the PhotoVoice exist in the tension between process and product to communicate emergent understandings, a process that Joe and I sit with in our interview, where we discuss our expectations for the PhotoVoice, and being conscious of our embodied reactions to method. This further delineates the instability, contingency, and multiplicity, of these intellectual and affectual challenges:

> Joe: It's hard to think through because when it happens in the moment you naturally put your armor on and you try to just survive through it, and then you don't think about it. So now it's recounting a lot of those circumstances and trying to pull it all apart to figure out the details. That's what I'm finding anyway.
>
> Jaisie: This is just the first step in trying to figure out… I'm not grading you on this (both laugh), it's just about your process. I thought people would be like "here's my

[157] Muñoz, "Queerness as Horizon," 25.

> photos, here's my descriptions, let's put them in an exhibit" but what's happening is some people have titled their photos and then changed the titles or changed their photos… and I feel like that's important to show how we are changing and thinking. So if you decide to do things differently I'll keep track of what you've done so far and see where it takes you.
>
> Joe: Yeah this is very much reflecting any process I apply to getting work done. It's like I overthink it to *death*, and then I have this huge document usually in front of me of how I'm going to do something, then it's like…. why didn't I just *do* it? (both laugh) so…
>
> Jaisie: Well I don't want this to be exhausting for you, but I hope you're interested in that process.
>
> Joe: I totally am, and I'm trying to do a good job, which is funny 'cause that's not the point really… obviously trying to figure out what would help you the most is important to me as well. And also! Like these are important things for me to work through! ...and picture representations of things are really important. I take a *ton* of pictures, like tons and tons and tons and tons, all the time. And I like the first two because they are both taken from my perspective and it also illustrates the power dynamic and that exchange was happening in the moment. I think that is going to… as I further break down those concepts, things are going to change for me too, and the way I want to represent certain things.

Getting work *done* and done *well*, is something we are both nervously aware of and resisting, finding solidarity in the slowness and imperfection of internalizing that resistance. As queer visuality, PhotoVoicing revealed the lingering tensions of empiricist inquiry, transforming failure and difficulty into insightful, if not puzzling, breakthroughs in our intimacy with ourselves. As Avery Gordon states, participatory work makes room for "a different way of seeing, one that is less mechanical, more willing to be surprised, to link imagination and critique."[158]

[158] Avery F. Gordon. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination*. N - New, Second ed. (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008), 37. doi:10.5749/j.ctttt4hp.

c) Interviews as Co-Curations

Interviews were semi-structured, loosely guided by the PhotoVoice Prompts sheet (Appendix B), with the goal of discussing what the process of taking photos was like, the photographs, and collaborator strategies for storytelling, which I overview in the Taking Photographs section. Due to limitations around booking space and anonymity, the interviews took place in either their home, my home, or my office at the University. Interviews occurred between November 2019 and January 2020, and were audio recorded, ranging from 1.5- 3 hours in length. Discussions about the next steps of the research were included as part of the interview debrief, including collaborators desires for ongoing anonymity, their preferred methods of communication for the Group Curation, and any desires or limitations they might have had at this point.

I took notes after each interview instead of during to try and reduce any feelings of being observed. These notes often reflected direct feelings, such as "I felt like I talked too much," or after my first interview, "I felt very unprepared and embarrassed without a traditional interview guide." I also noted the conversations we had in-between audio-recording, for example: Lily and I discussed their favourite coffee in their kitchen, and the overlaps, repeats, and non-distinction of fashion eras, as well as our relationship with clothing; Joe and I talked about our shared disdain for Christmas music, and their recent resignation from long-term employment; and Tate and I reflected on how it was funny that so many second-hand items in queer households are from Catholic thrift stores. These notes are particularly nostalgic and remind me of the wholeness of the relationships we developed together, as well as the discovery of shared interests as a cushion to rest on while retelling violence.

PhotoVoice interviews felt markedly different from other interviews I've participated in previously. Something like a co-curation, collaborators decided the flow and content that

would shape the interview structure, and what got discussed. This looked different for each collaborator, but is exemplified in conversation with Joe, where he takes the lead on directing the conversation:

> Jaisie: So, what would be the most beneficial way for you to talk about your photos? Do you want to talk about the ones you haven't taken yet, or explain more the ones you have taken…?
>
> Joe: I think I wanna take the examples of known violence within the situation, and then work on what kinds of details I can bring that to help you. From there...that would be a good framework to work from. Then, maybe drum up some ideas about some of the other things I would like to find a frame on.
>
> Jaisie: Okay, where do you want to start?
>
> Joe: Let's start with the bathtub one then.

Many also requested verbatim copies of the interview transcripts for them to utilize as they continued to form the captions that would accompany their photography in the following weeks. In this way, the interview became an unexpected resource for collaborators to use as they processed the violence they discuss and shaped their stories about violence in this context. The interview also acted as a curatorial space to work through some of the technical challenges of photographing anonymously. This was most apparent when Simon explained the difficulty of achieving a photograph of their own body without the help of someone else. Expressing their desires for the photo, we practiced layouts with the resources in my living room, taking and deleting drafts, figuring out likes and dislikes, until they felt sure of their idea, which they later photographed in their own home. Describing the experience as "lively," Simon found it beneficial to talk through everything they were "prepared to talk about," and "go through [their] pictures and have context for that" as well as "have new conversations."

d) Group Curation

Following the interviews, collaborators were invited to join a customized working group through the online group planning platform *Basecamp*, seen in Figure 7: "Basecamp Online Platform," with the goals of sharing photos with each other, building content themes, and generating their collective vision. To avoid unnecessary burdens around the technical labour involved, I pre-uploaded their individual PhotoVoice projects into albums, and started themed conversations in the Message Board around guest lists, layouts, and location. Un-themed, unstructured, and update-related conversations would also take place in both the Message Board and the Campfire.

Fig 7: "Basecamp Online Platform"

The platform was established through my research email and was accompanied by pre-created Gmail research logins for each collaborator to avoid use of their personal emails, ensuring both anonymity and clear notification boundaries. Through the chat feature, collaborators expressed feeling significantly overwhelmed and unexpectedly vulnerable during the first few days on the group platform, due to both the quantity and diversity of the

photo-content, which lead to varied levels of participation and extended timelines for the Group Curation. While the guideline of five to eight photos per collaborator was chosen as a photo-range to allow for creativity, depth, and breadth of experience, a reduced number might have felt more emotionally and strategically manageable.

Accessibility and location-based resources mattered the most to collaborators, who chose an exhibit location "easily accessible being right downtown and the building has elevators" (Simon), with "a big plasma screen TV we can tap into for media use if needed, fun white boards we could utilize to engage our guests, and lots of room to set up an interesting experience" (Joe). Collaborators also cared deeply about communicating their stories in coherent, exciting, and practical ways, as Tate suggested: "Having the photos projected would look really nice and help to brighten the space. I think a colour coding system for themes would be effective in guiding people through the space. Kind of give people a thread to follow. I really like the idea of objects like Joe has laid out as well," referencing "Joe Drawing Layout Plans." Lily added: "I think collaboratively though we could find areas of overlap, beds for example, and collage pictures together. Or with a word cloud of our captions or interview notes on beds and what they come to mean." This attentiveness and creativity is demonstrated further in "Zines, Colour-Coding, and Mind-Maps," where collaborators discuss creating a (maga)zine as an exhibit companion piece.

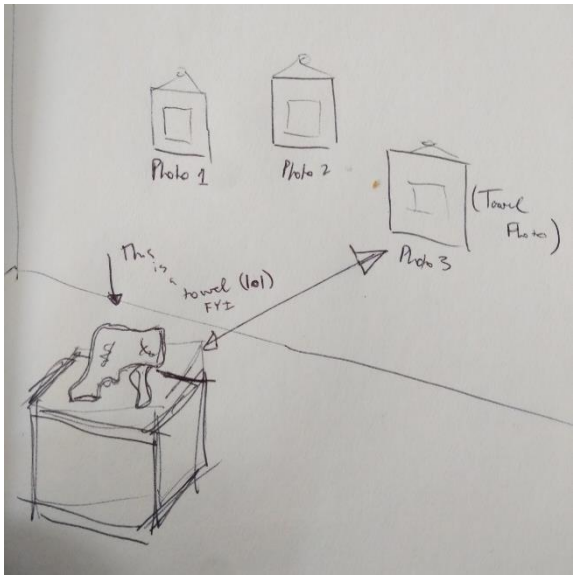


Fig 8: "Joe Drawing Exhibit Layout Plans"

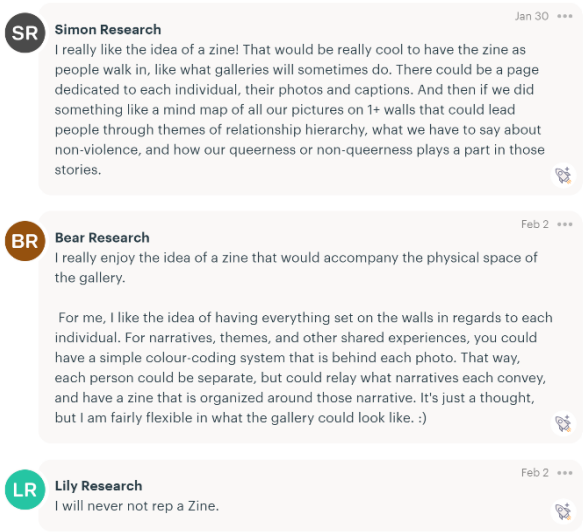


Fig 9: "Zines, Colour-Coding, and Mind-Maps"

Some of these suggestions came up in response to unexpected changes, particularly when the space we booked prohibited photographs on the walls. Accordingly, we arranged photographs to be laid out on tables instead, an exchange discussed by Tate and Joe:

> Tate: I like the table/collaborative vibe idea a lot. Alongside the zine it'll hopefully open up some good conversation, and I'm always partial to a grassroots feel.
>
> Joe: Tables! Workshop! Connections!

Overall, collaborators used the platform to form their collective vision; experiment, disagree, find consensus; strategize, make decisions, and generate new ideas; understand their points of difference and commonality; affirm and validate each other's stories; and have continued agency at all stages of the research. Individually, the platform also gave collaborators the opportunity to re-take, adjust, redact, and re-add their photographs as needed, which became an important intervention regarding the felt pressures around hypervisibility and invisibility, as well as a way to respect the shifting nature of their relationships to themselves and others.

e) Exhibit

The exhibit was the final stage of the participatory process, initially planned to be facilitated in a downtown University event space and featuring collaborator's photography laid out thematically on tables. Guests, invited through Facebook and personal email from personalized collaborator lists, would have had the opportunity to share food and interact with the materials by leaving comments and building conversations on the margins, as well as in-person. Exhibit Zines composed of shared themes generated from collaborator interview quotes, were printed to accompany the exhibit materials, and would be taken home with guests as a future-oriented conversation tool.

However, in March 2020, two weeks before the exhibit was scheduled, public health officials ordered an immediate suspension of all public gatherings and began promoting social distancing and isolation strategies in response to the COVID-19 pandemic. Many borders, schools, institutions, and other public services were closed, and the University of Lethbridge suspended face-to-face research, urging researchers to anticipate change, and prohibiting the use of all University campuses, including our downtown event space.

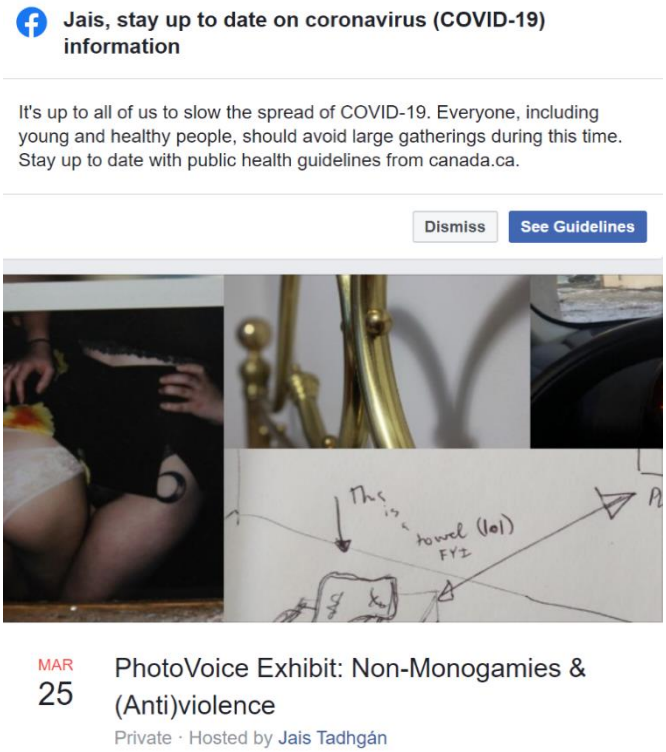


Fig 10: Facebook Event, ft. COVID-19 Guidelines

Collaborators and I discussed these changes on *Basecamp* with a lot of hesitancy and disappointment, eventually deciding to transform the Facebook Event page, originally intended as an invitation platform, into the event space itself. PhotoVoice materials were uploaded into individual albums along with an Exhibit Zine album, and guests were encouraged to engage with the posts through reactions, comments, or private messaging the event host, myself.

The process of inviting guests was ethically challenging and technically imperfect, as I negotiated collaborators' complex network of relationships, as well as pre-established anonymity measures. Prior to the event, these concerns, including the unintended possibility that guests may be invited who might have been abusive or violent to other collaborators, were discussed over Basecamp, and as one collaborator brainstormed:

> I think to preserve anonymity, each participant should put together a list of invites and forward it to Jaisie. Then they can use whatever front end system they choose to

> get those invites out into the world (FB, eventbrite, email directly?)...I feel weird about an openly accessible document where I'd have to disclose my invitees' personal emails. Maybe we could email or DM you with the personal emails?

Following a thoughtful discussion about the hostile gaze, voyeurism, and other dilemmas of visibility and representation,[159] collaborators chose to keep guest lists private. However, the names of guests to invite were often shared with me without a means to contact them, and collaborators were unable to ask for emails themselves without revealing their involvement in the research. I found most guests without email contacts on Facebook, where I asked guest's consent to be their Facebook friend before being able to invite them to the Facebook Event. All guests were enthusiastic and supportive about being reached out to in a way that felt normal to them, although, due to the likelihood that several messages may have been lost to guests "Other" inbox, a more reliable means of communication should be considered for researchers attempting online invitations. 38 guests with whom collaborators were comfortable sharing their PhotoVoice were invited overall, with 21 "going" or "interested," and 12 engaging directly with the content.

In response to Lily's caption from "My House is Warm and Full of Queers," one guest, quoting Lily, commented "'To push what is queer beyond the confines of my body, to these walls, and beyond those.' This line made me tear up." In another response to Simon's photo "Subcutaneous," they wrote: "This is so challenging and important to read, as someone who has spent their entire life being shamed, abused, and objectified for being fat. I appreciate this honesty. It elicits a really visceral fear response in me, and I want to interrogate that more." These two responses suggest that not only can PhotoVoice *capture* the embodied and material manifestations of our social lives, but also *elicit* them in viewers, continuing these conversations through their bodies, consciousness, and relationships.

[159] Holtby et al., "To Be Seen or Not to Be Seen."

Beyond content discussion, the online platform also became a space to ask questions about research, decision making, curation, and power. In Figure 11: “Guest Curiosity About Choosing “Representative” Language,” a guest expressed interest in how exhibit themes were chosen, and the creation of the zine more generally, to which I replied with a summary about the research process, not only encouraging methodological curiosity and transparency, but also allowing collaborators to see how I’m interpreting and describing our collective action to their guests-an interaction that may have been more private during an in-person event.

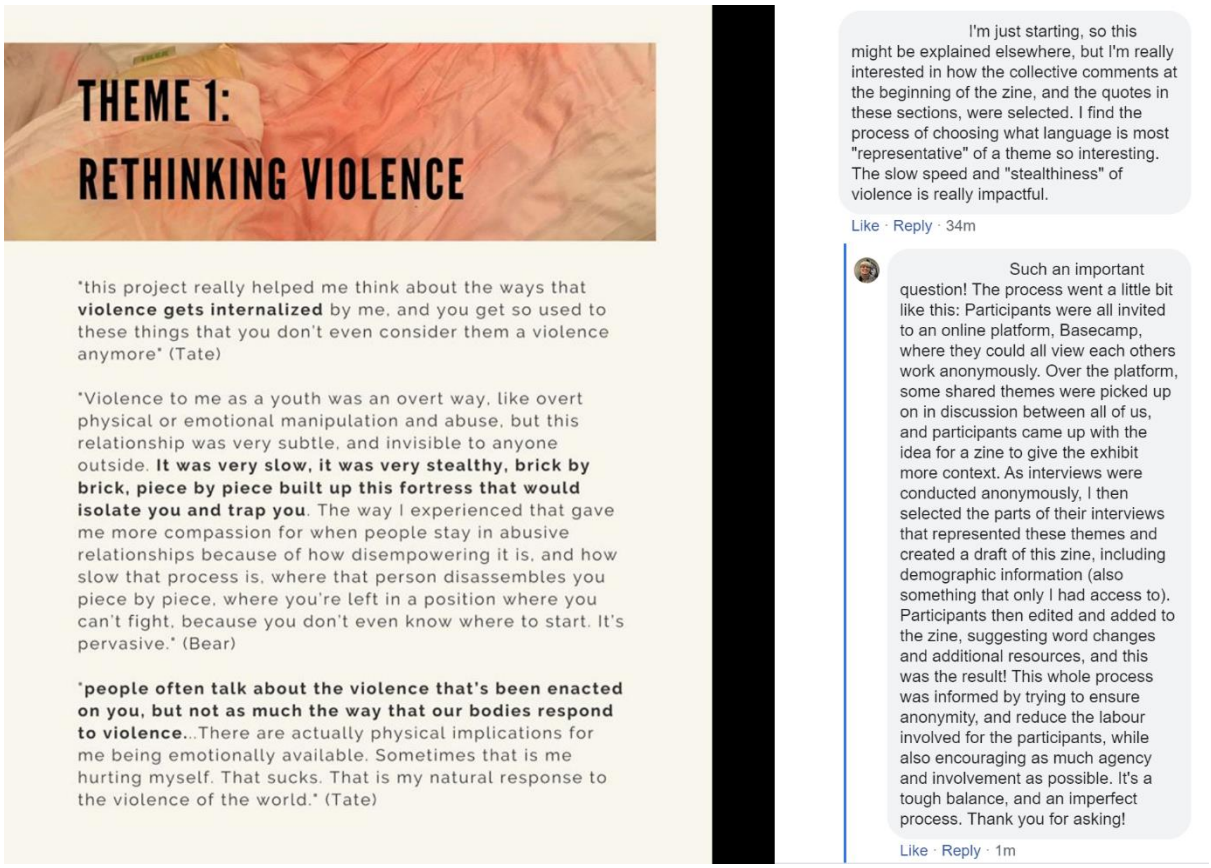


Fig 11: Guest Curiosity About Choosing “Representative” Language

One guest reflects more on the online adaptation of the exhibit, noting honest reactions, physical longings, and the gaze of the guest:

> Having this be online is really interesting. On the one hand, it's allowing me to encounter the exhibit at my own pace, in the safety of my own room, in comfortable clothing, and to react honestly without being afraid of how people around me might react— laughing at dark humour, being surprised by something that I might be self-conscious of other people already knowing about, etc. But on the other hand, it also limits how I can react. I hadn't thought about how much I would react physically to

> these images in the physical world; I would want to be able to nod, to frown, to hold my hand to my heart, to express that mixture of grief and pride or congratulations or all of these other emotions that can't be conveyed through words or emojis. At the same time, I wonder how much of that would even be seen in a physical exhibit. Who would be watching the viewers, instead of viewing the content? I also found it really interesting that I wanted to "respond" to almost all of the photos and stories with stories and memories of my own, like I would if I were having a conversation with someone and wanted to mirror their experiences back to them, or ask their opinions, or just express why I'm feeling so seen or vulnerable. I wasn't expecting that. I feel healed and seen even though so much of it was about people's pain."

This guest's interpretation and responses to the exhibit is a part of the "method assemblage," which John Law describes as the crafting and bundling of relations both present and absent,[160] communicating the unsealed capacity of the PhotoVoice in inciting memory, empathy, pride, and pain. In this way, PhotoVoice images reflect consciousness, not always understood with respect to that which it depicts, but rather that which it allows the viewer to experience. Indeed, Rice et al, in their instruction against settler logics in multimedia storytelling, emphasize how "stories are told in the moment with intention and that it is the listeners' responsibility to pay close attention."[161]

[160] John Law, *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research* (New York: Routledge, 2004), 161.
[161] Rice et al., "Re/turning the Gaze," 9.

During our final check-in, collaborators expressed their investment in the process, not the product, and how their feelings of disappointment were outshined by the energy they received from guest comments. Organizing an exhibit around taking photographs asked collaborators not only to reflect on their own experiences as intimate publics, but also to produce and perform a social service for their community. Collaborators grappled with their excitement for the future-oriented practical application of this, in tandem with their feelings of inadequacy, productivity, and utility, often checking in to ensure they were being "helpful to the research." While aware of this setup, some collaborators also specifically resisted discourses of productivity and utility, seeing instead how the research process could be useful to them. This resistance appeared in small yet significant ways, such as creating a closed event for specific guests, re-interpreting and modifying the Photovoice prompt sheet, and writing long photo descriptions combined with poetry, that are not as universally digestible, accessible, or palatable.

2.3 Reflections

2.3.1 Queer(y)ing Research Relationships

Our relationships are more complicated than what we share, and collaborators and I brought the pain and persistence from lives often restrained, disciplined, and subjugated, to our processes of coalition building. Throughout the course of the research all of us navigated instability, grief, intimacy, and euphoria. The collaborative process was interrupted and shaped by collaborator bankruptcy, shifting partner and housing instability, visits to the psych unit, the energies associated with political organizing, adjustments to medications, travel plans for the holiday season, COVID-19 self-isolation measures, and the ebb and flow of disillusion, dread and *resurgence* that results from changing social and political landscapes. These everyday dynamics seemed somewhat normalized for many collaborators, and while

these challenges did not arise from the research process itself, they nonetheless impacted the way it was generated. Changes were made allowing for extra weeks to consider the work, several unplanned phone conversations were had to offer additional support, and we all set boundaries over how often we should check in, and what platforms were acceptable to communicate on. While I encouraged some collaborators to lean into these experiences as representations of their place in this current personal, social, and political moment, other collaborators used their PhotoVoice to take much needed space from these challenges.

Incredibly important was the way our relationships struggled to both embrace and resist institutionally imposed vulnerability, and anonymity measures. The funding that I applied for, which allowed me to live and research without experiencing financial insecurity, required an application by December 1st, 2018, months before my Human Subject Research Committee Ethics Application was scheduled. While I was successful at receiving funding, it came at the expense of developing a proposal prior to formally approaching queer non/monogamous communities to negotiate a shared research focus. The work of research ethics boards and funding models for research are at times are incompatible with the relationship building required for queer feminist participatory action research. Together, we explored the institutional and structural barriers that emerged as they asserted individual and collective identities, and negotiated boundaries, access, and power relations in the process of designing and conducting research.

Collaborators expressed feeling vulnerable at times yet annoyed with the creative limitations of anonymity. After asking Simon if they're concerned about the possibility of being identified if they choose to include their body in a photograph, they express:

> Simon: Part of the reason I want to do this research is to help other people know that it's okay that stuff happens, and if there's some resemblance of me, I think that's also okay too, because personally I would hope that would make people feel more connected to my story.

> Jaisie: I think so. I think there's a weird balance in research. You don't want to make something hard for the people involved and create backlash, but I also think that's a bit of a story that isn't necessarily true. You don't want your story to be stripped of…
>
> Simon: All the juicy bits.

Discussions of the complexities of vulnerability and anonymity mean troubling our assumptions around risk, as well as confronting the problematic conceptualizations of vulnerability embedded in research ethics board practices and the impact they have on relationship building and the research process.

As five collaborators and I shared previous relationships through queer community organizing, and more personal friendships, I struggled with the isolation that resulted from researching from within my own community, and having personal relationships transformed into associations with work and research production. I had to resist protector impulses that are attached to participant victim narratives, while also caring deeply for the wellbeing of my collaborators, knowing that some of them would continue to be in my life after the research period ended. Indeed, (dis)comfort is an important part of building politically engaged relationships, and I found myself sitting in a space between discomfort and too much comfort in our interactions: being corrected; talking too much, or not enough; being apologized to unnecessarily, noticing moments of undue gratitude, and witnessing power arise in my relationships in new ways; feeling like a burden, feeling dismissed, and working hard for small things that often went unnoticed. Sometimes I looked through the materials and felt hopeless, confused, and disoriented, and other times I wept and laughed from the intimacy, complexity, and solidarity their stories allowed. How do we relinquish power and still feel close? How do we come to terms with all that is said and left unsaid?

Edging closer the all too dichotomous labels of "person"/ "friend" with "researcher" felt both brave and troubling, as if I was failing to perform either part adequately, unable to

make concrete themes out of ephemeral stories, regretting questions unasked, and struggling to feel and breathe and think all at once. Yet, as Jessica Fields reminds participatory researchers, "silences in data are not problems to be solved with more accurate field notes or transcripts. PAR calls collaborators into a dynamic and generative process of inquiry in which understandings and selves are made and unmade, desires are met and unmet."[162]

2.3.2 Voicing Violence: Speakability, Authorship, and Resistance

Despite the immense communicative potential of visual methodologies, surprisingly few community-based research studies have centered collaborators' visual meaning-making processes. Throughout this section, I anchor my reflections in two important excerpts from conversations I had with Lily and Simon that demonstrate their personal interrogation of "voice," and the politics of authoring, speaking, and viewing violence. Moreover, these excerpts show their purposeful resistance of hegemonic discourses of violence, and the complex discursive effects of data being generated and presented visually all of which called on us to rethink normative responses to risk and victimhood.

[162] Fields, "The Racialized Erotics of Participatory Research," 47.

In the picture my bed is adorned with white bed sheets, stained with red and pink, body paint that rubbed off in a hookup the previous night. The stains remind me of viscera though. In the moment I take the picture I feel no fear, regret, or violation. What created those stains was consensual and felt safe. Unlike that one night I remember. I smile. I take them off and wash them. Bleaching them back to white as best I can. Returning them to default. Whether it felt safe or not we can still wash out that memory.

Fig 12: "A Night of Safety" (Lily)

Messing with the legibility of their story within mainstream anti-violence Lily describes

Figure 12: "A Night of Safety:"

> Lily: So, this one appears very visceral. I like this photo a lot, and I like what it captured for me a lot. So this is… it's not blood (both laugh)
>
> Jaisie: I did assume it wasn't. It looks a little bit like hair dye?
>
> Lily: It's body paint. It was body paint from a Halloween costume that I didn't wash off, and the reason I didn't wash it off was because I hooked up with someone and brought them home, and didn't really care to take a shower. So, I stained these white bedsheets, dramatically. And I had to bleach them to an iridescent pink. But it felt significant to me that this photo appears to be very *violent*, or at least it's…okay, maybe it doesn't totally look like blood, but it has that like appearance that it's red on a white bed.
>
> Jaisie: It looks like you could have been wearing makeup and then cried a lot. That's the impression I get from it.
>
> Lily: *Yeah*, me too. Yeah. But it has that impression, but for me, this was kind of the first time I felt safe, and in control, in that sort of context of hooking up.
>
> Jaisie: I really like that though.… the assumptions of what hook-up culture, what violence, or what even a bed sheet photo in a violence project is supposed to come burdened with those ideas. I think that's a really cool way of framing your experience. I like it a lot!

> Lily: Yeah, I was very excited. I took that photo right after we originally met to discuss the research, and I was like "ohhh, I got a good one!" (laughs)

As Rice et al. write, "'telling our stories' [is] not enough."[163] For Lily, the significance of disrupting the apparent *appearance* of violence becomes a part of the voice for their story, knowing their image would be taken up by viewers expectations of tragedy and loss, emphasizing "the contrast that's there, at least between the appearance of it and how I interpret it and the feelings I've had."[164] Rice et al, speaking on Indigenous ontologies, remind researchers working in visually-oriented storytelling genres to: "reject any western ontology that takes an object-oriented view to reality, challenging the empiricist idea that "seeing is believing" and empiricism's orientation to the material world as relatively stable, discoverable (or in the case of the camera, capturable) and knowable."[165] What *is* knowable for Lily are the tentative, fluid, and sometimes untrustworthy moments of agency, pleasure, and safety, that come hand in hand with experiences of past and potential violence, and "where and how you feel power again. And it's not linear, it's not simple, and it's unpredictable, 'cause there are times when you don't feel that power when you thought you would have."[166]

My conversation with Simon about their use of their poetry for a photo-caption also speaks critically to authoring stories of violence:

> Simon: If I was to do that I would want to be conscious of how I write it, because it would be easy for me to write it in a way that would feel self-victimizing. I think it would be important to address how passive the communication was, and how that gave opportunity to the abuse.
>
> Jaisie: Totally...it doesn't have to be in the language of victimization, it can be in your own language.

[163] Rice et al., "Re/turning the Gaze," 9.
[164] Lily. *Co-Curation.* November 25, 2019.
[165] Rice et al., "Re/turning the Gaze," 6.
[166] Lily. *Co-Curation.* November 25, 2019.

> Simon: Yeah, I wanted to balance it so it didn't feel like I was self-victimizing, but it also wouldn't dismiss the fact that it was abuse, too.

For Simon, finding the words, the language, and the imagery to represent the violence they experienced, is determined not only by memory, but present and future-oriented interpretations, and (dis)identifications with "victim." Simon's methodologies explore their awareness of how power works through categories, such as victimhood, entering and manipulating the synchronically fixed nature of their limits. Silvia Posocco explains that *different ears* will construct and produce different meaning afterwards and at different times, resulting in a circuit of unstable authorship where "one's signature is not one's to offer."[167] The authors and ears of anti-violence movements often establish and uphold mutually exclusive qualifications of victimhood and survivorship, and survivor and perpetrator, unable to hear the shame and pride, weakness and strength, vulnerability and courage, that can exist within any one person. Consequently, the "circuits of unstable authorship" offered by Posocco is made meaningful through the framework that it offers for a critical analysis of accountability, allowing space for collaborators to claim rhetorical and intellectual autonomy, while also asking more of their listeners in disentangling themselves from the depths of assumptions, and disavowed relations of history, that uphold the anti-violence movement. Through PhotoVoice, collaborators did not *capture* material reality, but *enacted* archives, metaphors, aesthetics, and allegories of things partially examined or felt. Mobilizing intimate political desires and unrest, they created and influenced social memory, and cultivated a cultural moment to participate in. Consequently, they acknowledged personal and social histories that resisted closure, created space for conflicting narratives, and integrated multiple

[167] Silvia Posocco, "(Decolonizing) The Ear of the Other: Subjectivity, Ethics and Politics in Question," in *Decolonizing Sexualities: Transnational Perspectives, Critical Interventions*, eds. Sandeep Bakshi, Suraiya Jivraj and Silvia Posocco (Oxford: Counterpress, 2016), 256.

forms of evidence. Collaborators were excited to participate in something creative, and have control over producing their own stories in a way that worked for them, as people who feel they are all too often "mined" by researchers for LGBTQA2S+ data (Lily), mobilizing performance to "survive the present, improvise new worlds, and sustain new ways of being in the world together."[168]

What social relations do collaborator's PhotoVoice practices intervene in, control, or open up? The following chapters address the themes collaborators chose through anonymous group discussion: "rethinking violence," "acceptable forms/stereotypes/ expectations of queerness," "labour, needs, and boundaries," "hierarchies," and "creating change."

[168] Joshua Chambers-Letson, *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life* (New York: New York University Press, 2018), 5.

Chapter Three:

Themes in Non/Monogamies: Living Inquiries by and for Queer Communities

> The internet announces over and over that love is everywhere, that when we are ready, it will arrive. There is no limit on love besides the limits we place on it...The internet implores me to feel love and to feel loved, to allow it to flourish wherever it will. The queer, politicized and polyamorous communities I frequent cast suspicious glances at those of us who do not, or cannot, love so freely. If I am afraid of not being loved, if I hold on too tightly, if I am afraid to let go, I may as well be a heterocapitalist. I am certainly not embodying the ideal of a queer utopia where love exists in abundance.[169]

The following stories do not represent points of closure, nor are they representative of all queer or non/monogamous experiences of violence, demonstrating instead gentle attempts at situated knowledge, striking offers for action, and opportunities for living inquiry, challenging the dictates of the social institutions and systems of our "broken-down presents,"[170] in order to push beyond our social and political imaginaries. A search for the complexities of violence that hide beneath the (in)security of non/monogamous identity, home or community, collaborators explore what "barriers of gender, color, culture, sexuality, might rise between us when we [see] each other,"[171] in what Muñoz similarly describes as affective and cultural *surplus*.[172]

The five themes discussed in this chapter are "Rethinking Violence," "Labour, Needs & Boundaries," "Hierarchies," "Acceptable Forms/Stereotypes/Expectations of Queerness," and "Creating Change." As outlined in the previous chapter these themes were collectively created online by the collaborators during the *Group Curation* stage of the participatory process, following a conversation thread about where their stories convened, overlapped, or connected in a way that was meaningful to them. These were designed to carry

[169] Morrigan, L*ove without Emergency*.
[170] Muñoz, "Queerness as Horizon," 30.
[171] Minnie Bruce Pratt, "Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart," in *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*, eds. Ellen Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt and Barbara Smith (New York: Long Haul Press, 1984), 31.
[172] Muñoz, "Queerness as Horizon," 2009.

conviction neither as a site of subjugation nor a cloaked strategy of resistance but instead "a mode of being" characterized by the pursuit of a meaningful subjecthood for queer non/monogamous community in Lethbridge.[173] Energized by both collective longing and political urgency, their stories trace constellations of violence[174] as part of an attempt at constellated *relationships* that "allow people with common goals to come together, produce, act, and then disband, reform, or continue as needed."[175]Ambivalence was not an obstacle, but rather a consistent feature of developing their stories and themes, as activists and scholars are routinely in conflict with one another, even as we share aims, convictions, and commitments.

While many collaborators were preoccupied with their stories being appropriately authoritative, I continue to fear failing at the vulnerability needed to give these stories justice and complexity. Role modeling discomfort is challenging for my nervous system, as I set up and take down walls throughout the writing process. As some of these stories feel so *close,* I hope that readers will acknowledge both the speakable and unspeakable elements of these inquiries and consider "not only what people can articulate about their feelings but also what they cannot articulate and cannot feel."[176] Through their PhotoVoice inquiries, collaborators begin to name and resist the narratives of violence that they have internalized, become accustomed to, and that have become punctuated in their particular spaces of non/monogamies, uncovering the ways that gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence fail to capture their complexity.

---

[173] Jessica Fields, "Feminist Ethnography: Critique, Conflict, and Ambivalent Observance," *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 42, no. 4 (August 2013): 498., https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241613483567.
[174] Radhika Coomaraswamy and Nimanthi Perera-Rajasingham, eds. *Constellations of Violence: Feminist interventions in South Asia* (New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2008).
[175] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson, "Constellations of Coresistance," in *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017), 217.
[176] Simpson, "Constellations of Coresistance," 217; Jessica Fields, Martha Copp, and Sherryl Kleinman, "Symbolic Interactionism, Inequality, and Emotions." In *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions,* Jan E. Stets, Jonathan H. Turner, and Jonathan H. Turner, eds. (Boston, MA: Springer US, 2006,) 497.

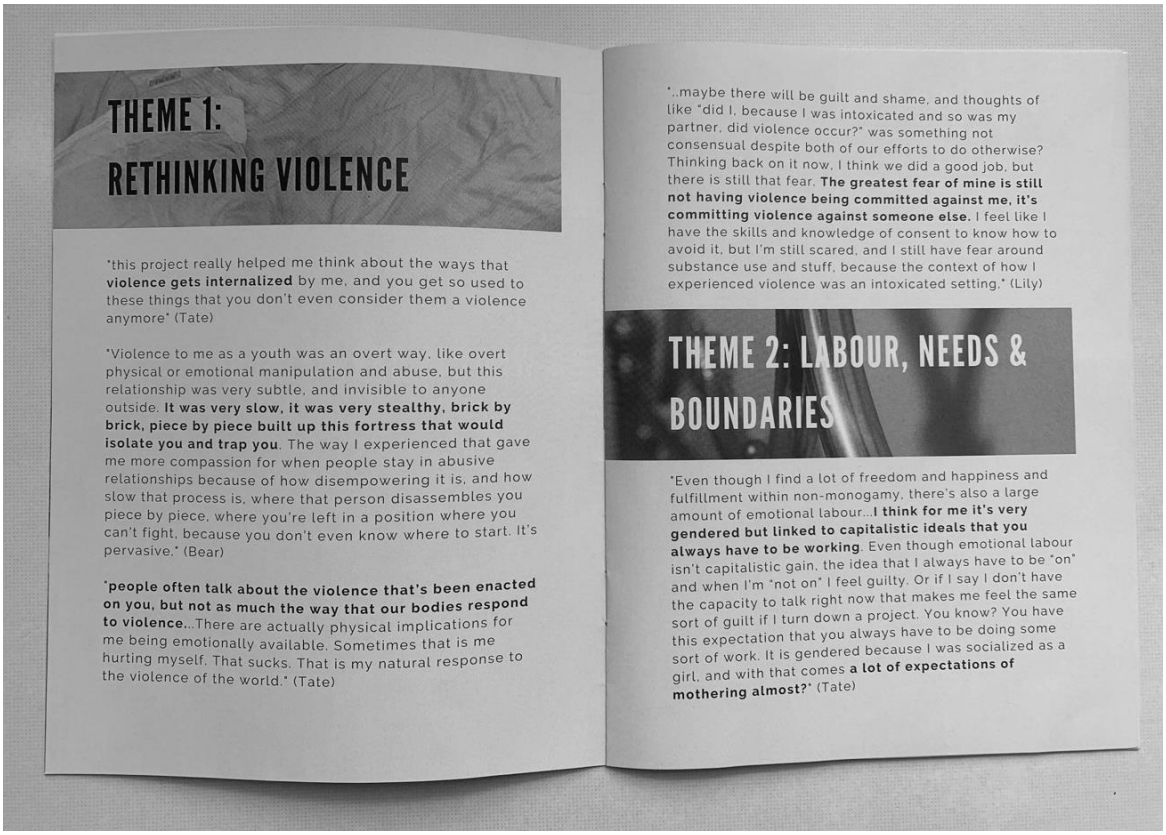


Fig 13: "Exhibit Zine: Theme 1 (left)"

3.1 Rethinking Violence: Geopolitical Intimacies, and Plural Resistance

This first section is based on the theme "Rethinking Violence" (Figure 13) which is anchored in six of the collaborators' stories. I have separated these stories further into two subsections: "Intimate Publics," and "Tensions of Perpetration and Victimization." Stories in Intimate Publics include: an acknowledgement of how relational and political violence gets enacted on queer bodies depicted in Tate's "Bodies as Battlegrounds," and the discussion of the interrelated violences of assault, medications, and desire in Lily's "Square Antidepressant, Round Trauma Hole." "Tensions of Perpetration and Victimization" includes Lily's discussion of the doubt and fear associated with sexual reclamation after assault in "Avoidance, Unacknowledgement, Stepping Over." Additionally, this theme includes Joe's experience of unknowingly putting their partner in a position of potential violence in "Drive Home," and finally, Simon's discussion of the distorted process of gaslighting and the

weaponizing of childhood sexual assault in “Embrace.” Collaborators engaged not only with their experiences of violence, but the discursive significance of those experiences, holding space in particular for the tensions of victimization and perpetration, and their negotiations of structural violence on and through their bodies. Underpinning their themes are the accumulative and relational effects of relationship violence, articulated in Figure 14, as well as their gendered critiques of the identity classifications that uphold heteronormative gender-based violence models.

This photograph is again taken from my personal perspective, standing above the bathtub in my personal residence. This is significant due to the fact that at one point, my partner, suffering from severe depression, had made a suicidal attempt. Violence has a ripple effect. Her experience with sexual and emotional abuse in past relationships significantly impacted her mental health, even years after the events had taken place. Violence doesn’t simply impact a single person, it’s invasive, and touches anyone who has more than a passing relationship with the victim.

Fig 14: “Power & Perspectives: 2” (Joe)

3.1.1 Intimate Publics

In Figure 15, Tate, a non-binary queer activist originally from a small town in Southern Alberta, describes their dermatillomania as a political “cost” for their body:

This is a photo of my chest. I have a compulsive skin picking disorder, and often use picking as an outlet for the day to day violence in my life. I wanted to put this photo into the project to show the physical ways that violence within relationships and lives can manifest on queer bodies. Picking for me has become a way that external violence and microaggressions literally show up on my skin. When I am struggling, my picking increases in severity. I wear my scars above my heart. In the context of non-monogamy and queerness, there's a physical and emotional toll for being active in the community and being political. I think sometimes that violence against our own bodies is sometimes the cost of being intimately involved with others.

Fig 15: "Bodies as Battlegrounds" (Tate)

As we sat in their living room, Tate vacillated between longing and frustration as they first described the context that gave life to "Bodies as Battlegrounds":

> I took that particular photo after a pick sesh. It was last night, because Trans Day of Remembrance ripped me to shreds. There were so many people there that I have so much amounts of love and compassion for, and there were such tangible amounts of pain. When I got home...I just was pretty beside myself. As much as it's not a healthy outlet, I did what I always do, and just ripped my skin apart. So I took this photo because we were talking about violence and people often talk about the violence that's been enacted on you, but not as much the way that our bodies respond to violence...that is my natural response to the violence of the world.

Related to their gender identity, and how this part of their body is particularly *gendered*, Tate further describes how this process is "almost a way for me to subordinate my body a little bit." Tate's photo is a scene of both care and confrontation which rotates heteronormative framings of relationship violence to articulate the inseparability of politics from emotional geographies. While the imagery of anti-violence campaigns on bodies that suffer frequently obscures the mechanisms of violence and leaves dominant conceptual frameworks (around,

for example, victim/perpetrators and public/private) uninterrupted, Tate takes on the representation of their harm as a call for an embodied visibility politics, calling into question the actors of perpetration, and situating violence in their life as a multi-faceted and multi-sited force. Indeed, by choosing to make their body known in this way, other forces of violence are *brought into the frame* through the marks on their skin, moving past an imperative to make structural violence visible, and instead engaging with how it is felt, contested, and reproduced.

Tate, like feminist geographers who engage in conversations of intimacy-geopolitics and violence, conceptualizes their body as an extension of wider political events. As Rachel Pain and Lynn Staeheli claim, "intimacy [is] wrapped up in national, global and geopolitical processes and strategising, international events, policies and territorial claims, so as to already be a fundamental part of them"[177] Tate describes their intimate violence as wrapped up in the events, policies, and strategies of where they engage in work, activism, and relationships, particularly connecting the responses of their partners to their chest with their work as a Harm Reduction Worker in the downtown core:

> I've had partners that ask why is my chest like that. My chest is like that because I carry the weight of the world. My work is really emotionally intense as well. People die all the fucking time at work, which is a lot. I really wanted to include that picture because we love to talk about non-monogamy as this liberating thing, but I think sometimes, and it's not something I would trade up, but there's a physical and emotional toll for being active in the community, and being political.

The Lethbridge downtown, where Tate tells me they both live and work, threads through all of their stories, and represents an area of complex conflict, discrimination, and community. Prominently characterized by ongoing colonial and racialized surveillance efforts in an attempt to address the concern of Indigenous homelessness, the downtown is the focus of the

[177] Rachel Pain and Lynn Staeheli, "Introduction: Intimacy-Geopolitics and Violence," *Area* 46, no. 4 (2014): 345, https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12138.

ten year municipal *Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy*,[178] which includes *The Lethbridge Police Watch Program*'s patrol directives to "discourage negative use through public visibility,"[179] and the relocation of street populations through the *Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design* (CPTED) grant program, as well as *The Downtown Area Redevelopment Plan* (DARP).[180] Highly critiqued by un-housed populations and harm reduction workers for their racial profiling tactics, these municipal strategies leave serious hate crimes unaddressed, including the recent discovery of two live mortar round explosives, seemingly targeting Indigenous people, at both the Supervised Consumption Site and Galt Gardens downtown locations.[181] These actions are a felt presence for Tate and their partners engaged in harm reduction work and, complexly, occur alongside City Hall's sponsorship of Trans Day of Remembrance and the $30,000 funding of the 2018 Lethbridge Pride Fest from the Council Contingency Fund, also hosted in the downtown core, highlighting the salience of race in the making of Lethbridge queernationalism.[182] Making these connections in our interview, and generating opportunities for readers to develop these links further, Tate maps a complex and dynamic spatial relation between the downtown as a site of interpersonal and state violence and harm reduction, as well as the entanglements of pain and complicity that those events come to mean in their intimate and embodied lives.

[178] "Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy," Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy, accessed May 18, 2020, https://www.lethbridge.ca/living-here/Downtown/Pages/Downtown-Clean-Safe-Strategy.aspx.
[179] "Lethbridge Police Watch Program," Lethbridge Police Watch Program, accessed May 18, 2020, https://www.lethbridgepolice.ca/news/lps-working-get-watch-patrollers-ground.
[180] "Downtown Lethbridge Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP)," Downtown Lethbridge Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP), accessed May 18, 2020, https://www.lethbridge.ca/Doing-Business/Planning-Development/Planning/Pages/DARP.aspx.
[181] Tom Roulston, "Lethbridge Discovery of Two Live Mortar Rounds," Global News, March 3, 2020, https://globalnews.ca/news/6620694/lethbridge-police-mortar-rounds/?fbclid=IwAR18-SfW4-hNMNBP4aChbwG8gDT-adouOIL_MxTK_3yMzDuab9bZ9xquOK0.
[182] Amar Wahab, "Unveiling Fetishnationalism: Bidding for Citizenship in Queer Times," in *Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalisms and the Politics of Belonging*, eds. OmiSoore H. Dryden and Suzanne Lenon (UBC Press, 2015), 35-48. Wahab, extending from Puar's discussion of "homonationalism," describes "queernationalism" as a strategic appeal in a historical moment in which the supposed "achievement" of formal gender equality and sexual liberation marks the West as exceptionally tolerant. This strategic "rebranding" often includes or covers up racial discrimination as part of the bid for queer citizenship.

Circling back to their theorizing of harm reduction, Tate reflects on how they carry their histories of heteropatriarchal violence with them on their body as they navigate new non/monogamous spaces, and the fraught, yet worthwhile, pursuit of that recognition:

> heterosexuality has been extremely violent to me...there's something queer about non-monogamy, and I find a lot of comfort in that. No matter what, there's the resistance to the violence of heteropatriarchy. It does protect you from harms a little. It definitely puts you in different ones. It's sort of six of one, half a dozen of the other. I try to apply a harm reduction philosophy to most things I do, but I'm very good at taking people at face value or not allowing their past or histories to get in the way of how I interact with them, but I often don't grant myself the same sympathy.

Tate's visual strategy in "Bodies as Battlegrounds" is one of plural resistance, contesting multiple forms of violence simultaneously,[183] examining the intersecting relationships between gendered corporeality and geographies of violence, and invoking the body in order to understand violence *in place.* Demonstrations of plural resistance, like Amy Piedalue describes, do not necessarily mean the partial or complete elimination of complex oppressions. Rather, resistance is accomplished by strategic compromise, embracing diverse and contradictory narratives to work against discourse that positions members of queer communities as primarily victims, or passive recipients of oppressive culture.[184]

Lily, a queer/sapphic non-binary trans woman, survivor, and activist who describes themselves as empathetic, flirtatious, and engaging in "budding romantic friendships," "sexual-platonic relationships," and "getting to know people," also grapples with complex intersections in Figure 16:

[183] Amy Piedalue, "Beyond 'Culture' as an Explanation for Intimate Violence: The Politics and Possibilities of Plural Resistance," *Gender, Place & Culture* 24, no. 4 (2017): 563-574, https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2016.1219323.
[184] Livia K Stone, "Suffering Bodies and Scenes of Confrontation: The Art and Politics of Representing Structural Violence," *Visual Anthropology Review* 31, no. 2 (2015): 177-189, https://doi.org/10.1111/var.12080.

Scattered around my dresser are medications, vitamins, hormones, some are being taken, some are abandoned. After I was sexually assaulted we changed to a stronger SSRI. Life got worse and became unbearable. We went up a caliber in medications to try to treat it. The root of this dysfunction wasn't actually the depression from trauma, which mostly just numbed life down. It was an endocrine issue that went untreated for months.

Fig 16: "Square Antidepressant, Round Trauma Hole" (Lily)

Negotiating feelings of support from their "council of different non-monogamous partners" who take an interest in their life and their healing, alongside the obligation and guilt associated with their "tanked" sex drive from the medication's side effects, Lily elaborates:

> ...these medications are only allowing me to be a certain person with partners, and I feel like some are being pushed away as a result of not being able to fulfill that sexual component that the relationship existed for. That is, again, another thing that feeds into frustration with medication, and the institutions that basically supply them, and encourages you to get on them and stay on them. They do have all those affects that pour out into your life and how you can handle relationships.

Their sense of invasiveness when Lily described this experience was palatable, particularly as they connected the disallowance of their sexual connections, which they have described as potential sites of healing in "A Night of Safety," with medical institutions who "supply them, and encourage you to get on them and stay on them." As Lily elaborates: "[medication] affects relationships in so many ways, and I very much see a through-line of trauma and the violence that originally caused that coming back *directly* to haunt relationships and how effectively I can engage with them, in that I now have to take medications." Lily both internalizes and disrupts their idea of a "good non-monogamous partner" feeling relief, loss,

and anger towards biomedical healing models and their influence in the politics of non/monogamous intimacy.

Working with the felt intimacy of structural, spatial, and institutional actors of violence, Tate and Lily use their PhotoVoice stories to both exist in and move past the details of their initial or ongoing experiences of violence, opening up future conversations around the impact of those experiences on how they navigate their bodies, their communities, and their relationships. Tate and Lily's PhotoVoice challenges discourses of individualism, popular shock tactics, and even the impulse to capture and repeatedly relay the details of violence, within anti-violence work.

3.1.2 Tensions of Perpetration and Victimization

Challenging the dichotomous language of victimization and perpetration was common ground for myself and the collaborators from the start, and yet, we agreed that disrupting this discourse meant bringing questions of accountability, trust, and power, in direct relationship with these terms. While categorizing perpetrators and victims as distinct groups of dangerous heterosexuals and vulnerable 'sexual minorities' is a politically seductive position in the media, social service bureaucracies, and the criminal justice systems of contemporary liberal states, it is reliant on continued practices of gendered essentialism that collaborators in this research were insistent on disrupting. Lily's Figure 17 best represents the starting point for these tensions, as they describe their fears following a Halloween hookup:

Laundry is such a tangible cost of existing.
Laundry ensures I will always feel
That life moves, bodies, sweat, and I do not exist in this world for free.
Even when I do nothing
I create laundry
Death, taxes, laundry…

The worst times I've had to do laundry were when I was trying to bleach a memory out of a blanket, a shirt, a pair of underwear. This bra discarded after the hookup described in *A Night of Safety* sat on the floor for weeks in my kitchen. I kept stepping over it. I don't want to touch what lies there. The memory that now lives in that bra. What will it make me think of if I pick it up again? Shame? That I perhaps navigated that encounter the wrong way? In a way that reopened trauma? Or created it? So many questions and fears lie in these dirty clothes. Probably more than most people will ever have to think of a dirty discarded bra.

Fig 17: "Avoidance- Unacknowledgement- Stepping Over" (Lily)

My conversation with Lily further elaborates on the tentative, fluid, and sometimes untrustworthy moments of agency, pleasure, and safety that come hand in hand with experiences of past and potential violence:

> Lily: Like, maybe it's executive dysfunction, maybe it's Maybelline (both laugh), but it fell there, and it didn't want to disturb it...although there was less pain around that encounter, less guilt and shame and fear and triggering things, there were still emotions around it....Maybe there will be guilt and shame, and thoughts of like "did I, because I was intoxicated and so was my partner, did violence occur?" was something not consensual despite both of our efforts to do otherwise? Thinking back on it now, I think we did a good job, but there is still that fear. The greatest fear of mine is still not having violence being committed against me, it's committing violence against someone else. I feel like I have the skills and knowledge of consent to know how to avoid it, but I'm still scared, and I still have fear around substance use and stuff, because the context of how I *experienced* violence was an intoxicated setting, and being intoxicated I'm worried that I won't respect my own boundaries if things happen again.
>
> Jaisie: So, this kind of communicates that...navigating pleasures, substances, and consent, and hurting yourself, or someone else.
>
> Lily: Yeah. Like, did I do it right? Was that a healing experience or was it potentially one that was violent or traumatizing, or would be traumatizing to look

> back on, and so I don't, or I don't turn a very intense lens on it and thoroughly analyze it.
>
> Jaisie: Because you did enjoy the encounter?
>
> Lily: I did enjoy it! But if I look back on it I'm like "did I do something wrong" and there's like a fear of that.

For Lily, their long-term healing from a previous sexual assault is an important aspect of conceptualizing violence, as they question both their nervous system and their enjoyment as part of a process of accountability. Locating the actors of perpetration is a secondary consideration for Lily, whose fears demonstrate how truly *un*afraid they are to consider the impacts that their sexual reclamation may have on themselves and other partners. The context of Lily's past assaults, as well as the (dis)identification with the perilous discourse associated with substance use, trouble our definitions of violence, and provide important starting points for partners' strategies of anti-violence.

Lily's compassionate interrogation of power is difficult to do when queer survivors are perpetually victimized, and queer lives more generally have pre-existing associations of pathology, deviance, risk, and violence. Indeed, situating trans people as perpetrators of violence risks re-pathologizing and further abuse, humiliation, and criminalization. Bear, who in between describing photographs engages with the struggle to protect trans lives while resisting their own experiences of abuse, outlines how their abusive partner being both trans and disabled affected how they sought anti-violence support:

> It very much undermined my ability to think about what I needed in this moment. It was like "this is what I'm experiencing, but I need to be there for them because they're experiencing so much right now." You would very much dismiss and invalidate what you were going through because you wanted to be there to support them. It was a good way for them to maintain power differentials and maintaining the status quo.

Bear further identified how gender "was used as a huge form of power differential in our relationship, because my partner at the time was trans and had transitioned and touted as

being the authority on trans and what it meant." Understanding themselves as a "secondary survivor," while having their own trans identity and (dis)abilities weaponized and disregarded, Bear's experience holds space for the complexities of identity-based abuse tactics. Nicole Brown outlines this as "deliberate attempts to undermine a trans person's identity" as well as instances where "people used identity politics to explain their abusiveness, and manipulate participants' own investment in an identity characterized by progressive politics to have them care for, and not leave them." Overall, Brown's study found that guilt around potential transphobia, feelings of "owing" protection because of their greater social privilege, and not recognizing this behaviour of "abuse" all contribute to the complexities of abuse in this context. This is in part due to the view that their trans partners were "more oppressed," in addition to overarching gender-based, heteronormative understandings of relationship violence in which the abusive person is the one with more social power. Both Lily and Bear's commentary reveals the limitations of gender-based heteronormative models of addressing relationship violence, rendering the forms of violence happening in queer communities incoherent, and invisible. This compels us to ask some difficult questions about the effectiveness and workability our anti-violence concepts and practices, what assumptions they rely on, and who they truly serve.

Simon, whose photographs refer to their first brush with non/monogamy, chose to add their voice to this section, outlining the difficulties of discerning abuse while being gaslit and verbally, financially, and sexually abused:

This is a part of 'Expectations', a painting by Klimt. After we officially broke up, [partner] began texting me with a compendium of all the things I had done to hurt him, the first one being that I wanted to practice non-monogamy. He also told me that all his friends agreed that I had financially and emotionally took advantage of him. He also accused me of sexually abusing him multiple times through our relationship. That was the most devastating to have him say. He took my vulnerability, of me telling him I was raped as a child, and weaponized it against me. It hurt even more because when we were together, I was expected to sexually gratify him most nights, and as soon as I did, he would dismiss me, often telling me to leave the apartment afterwards. I felt alone, but I continually grasped for his love.

Fig 18: "Embrace" (Simon)

Acknowledging the potential for their photograph to be read as diminishing the power of sexual assault disclosures, Simon attempts to tease at the differences between harm and power, and the weaponization of previous disclosures in the process of gaslighting. They describe how their abusive partner told them a compelling narrative: that Simon took advantage of him, that Simon was not capable of building community outside of their relationship, and that Simon was responsible for their ex-partner's own feelings of despair and hurt. Fearful of this language of perpetration, Simon describes labouring financially and sexually in exchange for relationship worthiness. Indeed, despite both Simon and their partner beginning their relationship "pretty confident in monogamy," non/monogamy came up as a way to *cope*, navigate their disparities, experiment with resource sharing, and the emotional care Simon was not getting from their partner. Throughout our conversation,

Simon speaks to simultaneously feeling comfort from their first queer partner, while needing to find fulfilling relationships and community that they weren't so dependent on for material resources:

> [I was] feeling like not wanting to be in that relationship and also wanting to explore other relationships because I loved him, but I knew I wasn't getting my relationship needs met, so I started bringing up polyamory and maybe it would be nice to explore, and I wanted to meet other queer people too, cause at the time he was the only queer person I knew, so it felt very isolating in that sense too.
>
> There was that sense of comfort in finding someone who wanted to be with me that was also queer and reasonably supported me, I guess. So there was comfort, and it was like a safety net, like if I didn't have him, I would be all alone, because I didn't have my family and I didn't have any other friends. All of our friends were his to begin with, which was also very difficult to navigate too, which I know that's on me too for not doing those things to actively take care of myself in that relationship. Most of the time I would passively get my needs met, and that's how that conversation of polyamory and non-monogamy began, because I was needing attention and care from him, but I wasn't able to express that, so I needed to find it from other people.

Simon's thoughtful discussion reveals the complexities of a survivor's attempts to diffuse abusive tension through opening up their relationships.

Joe, alternatively, struggles to navigate his privileged identity as a white cisgender male, as he navigates queer spaces, learns about anti-oppressive politics, and engages in relationships with multiple femme partners. In "Drive Home" he describes what he calls a "position for potential violence" he put a partner in:

Drive Home

I chose this photograph to illustrate the aftermath of a romantic pursuit of mine. Over time, I had built up a strong connection with a friend, and had plans to ask them out. This was my first romantic pursuit outside of my "primary" relationship. I suggested we chat over a meal, at an out of town restaurant, something we'd done many times in the past. My feelings were not reciprocated and the resulting drive home was uncomfortable to say the least. It was days later that I realized how uneasy I was with putting this person in that situation. In the moment, I didn't realize the power I had, and the pressure I put on this person - taking them out to an unfamiliar town, asking for something (it turns out) they didn't want to give me, and them relying on me for a ride home. I had unknowingly put this person in a position for potential violence. Speaking with them much later I learned that although they agreed it was really awkward, they never felt unsafe. Through this event, I learned a lot about my positionality within power exchanged within a relationship.

Fig. 19: "Drive Home" (Joe)

Joe seems very aware of the power he has as he unpacks his experience of "dealing with rejection for the first time," drawing a connection between his role models for masculinity and his relationship history, which at that point, consisted of an emotionally abusive ex-partner, and an ongoing eleven-year partner. Feeling "stupid," an "idiot," and "self-critical," he walks me through his retrospective process of questioning:

> The part that was potentially weird and violent was how much distance there was between where that disclosure took place, and how long it took to get home— the drive. That was really, really terrible for both of us, and filled with all kinds of gaps, silence, and strangeness. What if I had left this person in this town and left them to figure it out? If you don't tell me what I wanna hear.... This was like a wild negative fantasy that I played out afterwards in my head, but it was a gross situation to be in, and I didn't think about any of this other than in retrospect.

Similar to the fears Lily describes in "Avoidance, Unacknowledgement, Stepping Over," Joe expresses hope that his "wild negative fantasy," punctuated by the shame of his past abuse, as well as his longing for examples of more positive romantic relationships in his life,

communicates the intricate details and tensions of how power dynamics can work. Ultimately, he says, “I felt really good that I went out and at least told them how I felt, anyway. That was really empowering for me. I think it was obviously empowering for her to say no too.”

Throughout this project, it seems that all the collaborators were aware of their potential to harm others, even without knowing it at the time, refuting victim/perpetrator dyads, and seeing themselves and others as *both* and *neither*. Their willingness to consider the harm they have caused to others in particular moments subverts mainstream stereotypes of perpetration, signifying a shift from personal to collective responsibility. To me, their PhotoVoice inquiries make room to talk about our mistakes, our teachable moments, and the confusing and unstable mix of enjoyment and regret that can happen in spaces of intimate reclamation. Most importantly, they role model how this process is both exciting and necessary for the long-term health of our communities and the brave spaces we hope to create.

3.2 Labour, Gender, Capitalism

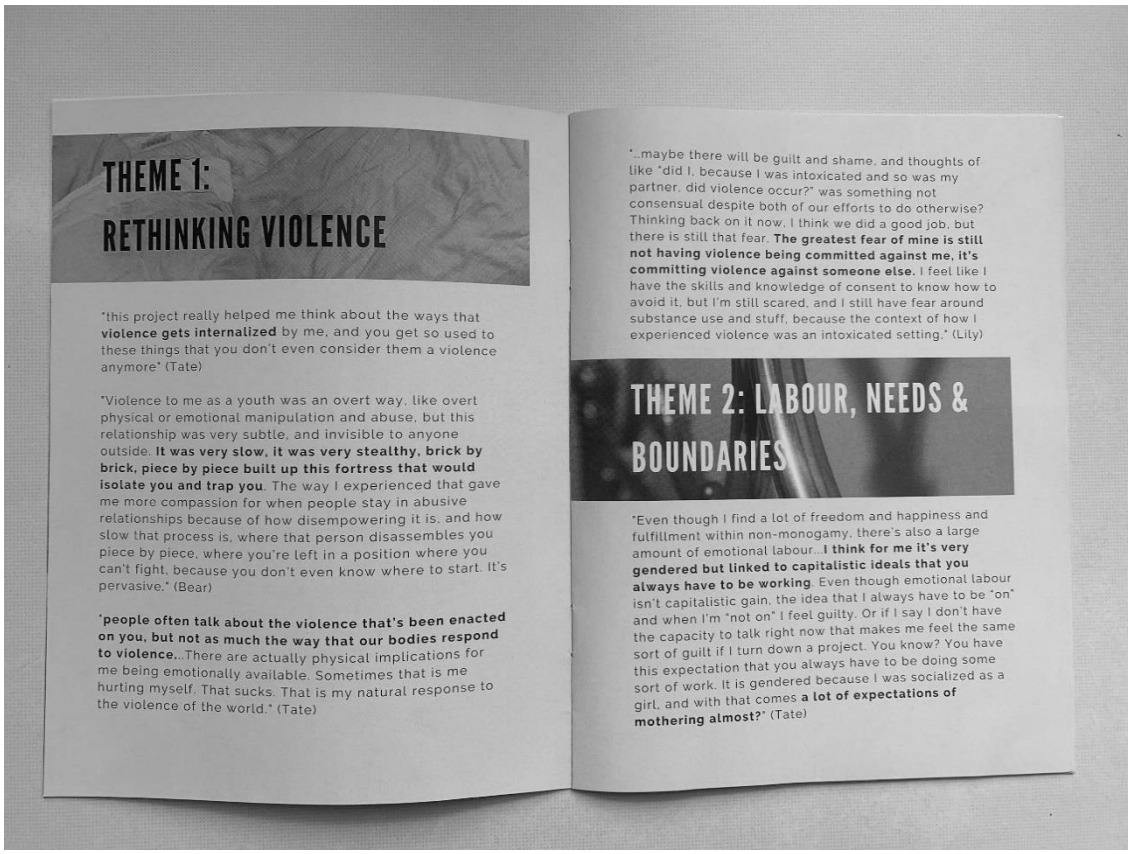


Fig 20: "Exhibit Zine: Theme 2 (right)"

This second section is based on the theme *Labour, Needs & Boundaries* (Figure 20) that stories from four collaborators are used to illustrate: gendered and capitalist constructions of care and work depicted in Tate's "I Cry All the Time When I Talk,"; the pressure to be "easygoing" and not "too much" in non/monogamous relationships that Quiet outlines in "Papers," as well as their discussion around the historically learned language of boundaries in "Bed"; and the nonconsensual development of their Submissive role in Bear's "Marked." Collaborators stories burst at the seams with theories of queer utopias, connecting honest discussions of improvising capitalism, care-work, and managing feeling in non/monogamies, with anti-violence efforts.

I chose this photo because I wanted to represent the feeling of being completely out of capacity for caring. It comes from the idea of asking if someone has any spoons left before expecting them to perform emotional labour. In this case, what is being represented is having your 'drawer of spoons' being completely bled dry, leaving only knives, and sharpness, behind. For me, being emotionally burnt out very quickly can turn into depressive episodes and self-harm behaviors. I have a very emotionally intense career, am naturally empathetic and also tend to just generally feel things incredibly deeply. This can result in a lot of burnout and fatigue, especially when the people surrounding me are struggling. In the context of non-monogamy and violence, it becomes very important to be doing regular check-ins with myself to ensure my capacity for caring is not being completely tapped. And further, am I being properly cared for? Being involved with multiple people in some capacity can be absolutely exhausting, so in order for non-monogamy to be sustainable for me, I need to maintain cognizance of my own capacities.

Fig 21: "I cry all the time when I talk" (Tate)

Tate's understanding of the "no spoons, only knives" analogy connects gender, non/monogamies, and work, with the complexities of violence they experience. Drawing on their feelings of exhaustion expressed in "Bodies as Battlegrounds," and partner's "venting" until they are out of spoons, they explain "what I do for work, what I do for school, and the people I interact with...all of those things require so much availability." Tate theorizes their emotional labour[185] as "very gendered but linked to capitalistic ideals that you always have to be working," comparing their feelings of responsibility in intimate and workplace contexts:

> Even though emotional labour isn't capitalistic gain, the idea that I always have to be "on" and when I'm "not on" I feel guilty. Or if I say I don't have the capacity to talk right now that makes me feel the same sort of guilt if I turn down a project. You know? You have this expectation that you always have to be doing some sort of work. It is gendered because I was socialized as a girl, and with that comes a lot of expectations of mothering almost? I try not to take that on at all, but I also do feel great amounts of responsibility and concern for the people I care about. Even if they're not necessarily "asking" me for emotional energy, I'm sometimes still expending it.

[185] Arlie Russell Hochschild, *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeling* (Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012).

Constantly anticipating people's needs is inseparable from the labour of work, and the spatial relationships they have with their clients in harm reduction: "I'm never off, ever. I think that's very much because of that expectation that we should always be working." Yet, locating the value of exhaustion and the "ability to handle" in both non/monogamies and harm reduction work, Tate also acknowledges that they "don't dislike being emotionally exhausted," and can usually "create a squeak of space." Serena Petrella's critical reading of polyamory advice books reveals that a conceptualization of relationships as 'work' is central to the paradigm of polyamory.[186] According to Petrella, the deliberate subjection to a "Protestant work ethic" purifies polyamory, distinguishing it from narcissistic hedonism and linking it to Foucauldian governmentality as a form of self-responsibilization. While Tate does not identify their relationships as strictly polyamorous ("non-monogamous"), their association of their relationships with the glorification of workplace exhaustion adds theoretical value in the context of Petrella's work. Tate's realizations reveal the complex deployment and repetition of historicized and politicized discourses in their intimate lives, and how "doing the work" can often mean a recognition that these forces are *working on us*, often as secret shareholders of queer liberal freedom.[187] Quiet, a non-binary femme student and activist in a polyamorous relationship, echoes Tate's analysis on gendered socialization and work, outlining the impacts that the pressures of their professional life have on their experiences of consent and boundaries in their relationships:

[186] Petrella, Serena. "Ethical Sluts and Closet Polyamorists: Dissident Eroticism, Abject Subjects and the Normative Cycle in Self-Help Books on Free Love," in *Sexual Politics of Desire and Belonging*, eds. Nick Rumens and Alejandro Cervantes-Carson (Amsterdam: Radopi, 2007).
[187] Shannon Winnubst, "Free to Be Queer: Queer to Be Free," in *Queering Freedom* (Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006), 111-149,

Some notebooks on top of a pile of papers on my desk. The notebooks are important to me, the bottom one is filled with doodles and ideas, at one time it was a creative outlet of mine. The top one is my journal that I use to organize my thoughts and process feelings. My desk is always disorganized and acts as a dumping ground for half-finished projects, ideas, papers and found objects. I don't feel like I'm an "easy-going" person in my professional life, and I can be intense and chaotic. I think I hide this part of my life and myself from other people, especially when they're getting to know me because I feel like I need to, in my personal life, not be "too much." I want my relationships to be simple, something untouched by all the stress in my life, unlike this desk. I have this desire for something to just be simple. If in my relationships I can be easy going I don't have to acknowledge things that bother me, and everything will be fine. They'll be simple.

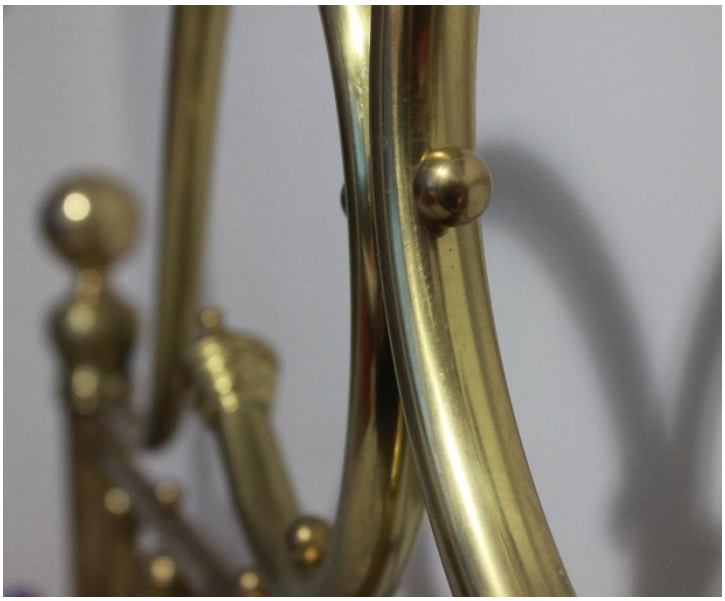
Fig 22: "Papers" (Quiet)

Quiet emphasizes the expectation to be "easy-going" and not "too much" in the context of non/monogamies, as well as their constant negotiation with class and gender privilege with their partners. Like Tate, the responsibility to ensure the wellbeing and safety of their other partners often takes precedence:

> Quiet: I think being raised female really affects that. In my relationships too— my partners have struggled with mental health issues so they have been less able to contribute if we live together, share tasks, or if we're planning something together, I'll just take on more...I'm fairly privileged and lucky, I'm white, so I often date people who are more working class, so I feel like I can't ask them for too much, so why can't I just do a little bit more. I should just support them more. But then it's just draining for me over time.
>
> Jaisie: So you're trying to balance the gendered emotional labour with the class hierarchies?
>
> Quiet: Yeah, which is difficult, and leads to other power imbalances because if my partner is really poor and can't pay rent and I say I'll cover it then there's this weird power dynamic, and that's not good either, and can lead to more unhealthy things. If I talk to another partner about it it can be uncomfortable. A few of my partners are all dating together, so if I'm like wow this happening then it creates tension in their relationship too. So how do I address it?

In our conversation, Quiet explains that because of the idea that non/monogamies is a solution in and of itself, and the increased visibility of strong ethical communication in those relationships, their friends assume they're "some kind of sex and relationship guru… so if I come to them asking for advice they can be like "oh, but you seem so happy". It can be hard to find support I think, sometimes."

As a companion photograph to "Papers," Quiet shares "Bed" to discuss how their learned emotional patterns from childhood, and their ideas about what they *should* want, interfere with their capacity to communicate consent:



This is my bedframe. My bed represents a place of intimacy and sexuality, but also a lot of unacknowledged feelings. Sometimes when I don't feel like it, I let my partners have sex with me or don't tell them to stop. I don't think I ever learned a language around boundaries. In my adolescence I found emotions very painful so for a long time I didn't really listen to my body. It's hard for me to know, let alone communicate, my boundaries when I don't have an awareness of my body. When did I ever stop and ask myself if I really want this? I guess I have ideas about myself, and what I should want/feel like/be like/do in my relationships.

Fig 23: "Bed" (Quiet)

Quiet, who is beginning to understand the reverberations of past relationships on their nervous system, their body, and how they have formed expectations, communicates the habit-forming nature of abuse: "When I was younger I would be punished for having feelings, so I just learned to not listen to them. My high school boyfriend was pretty abusive, and I wanted to feel a certain way about it because it was easier than realizing it was not okay. It was a habit I developed over time." Having never learned a language around their boundaries or

their needs, they frequently “let their partners have sex with [them] or don’t tell them to stop,” struggling to acknowledge their needs, even to themself. As we close our discussion, they share, “I have ideas about myself about what I should want, do, and feel in my relationships and use that to inform my decisions, instead of my actual needs... I learned to avoid it and say "this is what you should want" instead.”

Read together, “I Cry All The Time When I Talk,” “Papers,” and “Bed” delineate how “class, race, and sexual difference are read through the ability to contain oneself and wholeness becomes a primary index of cultural legibility.”[188] Often internalizing big system failures as emotional deficit, while also recognizing these as structural factors, Tate’s and Quiet’s struggles to identify and communicate their needs, as well as find support, are particularly challenging as successful non/monogamous relationship models are branded through the ability to make legible and verbally communicate all needs and boundaries. The unfolding legibility of their narratives of violence complicate our strategies for violence prevention in queer non/monogamous communities, revealing the inadequacies of an ahistorical and individualized approach to consent and ethical communication.

Against a set of gendered and capitalist systems that make identifying and communicating their needs difficult, their experiences are further complicated by the political goals and pressures that they identify as rural ambassadors of non/monogamies, where, in Lethbridge, space is rarely made for complexity, and failure. Bear, who discusses the “dismal” state of social services and support networks for non/monogamous folks, coupled with the “older queer community’s attachment to heteronormative monogamous values,” describes how: “A lot of people have misconceptions about it...slut-shaming it, the inability to be committed, you know? It’s the whole “well that’s why poly relationships don’t work”

[188] Winnubst, “Free to Be Queer,” 4.

and it's like, how many monogamous relationships don't work? It's a lot of confirmation bias." For all collaborators, identifying and understanding assault, as well as making their relationships legible for support, is consequently hinged on these systems— echoing Tate's sentiments from earlier: "[non/monogamies] do protect you from harms a little. [They] definitely put you in different ones."

Bear further teases out their fraught exploration of support, boundaries, and communication in their non/monogamous relationships:This photo features a scar on my back as a result of being engaged with my previous partner as a submissive of theirs. A trend in our poly relationship was being placed in a submissive role within a power dynamic with them and our mutual partner. At first, it was mutual exploration, and contained healthier forms of boundaries and communication. But it quickly became something where I was pressured to provide pleasure, service, and attention in what B wanted, with little consideration given to what I desired or needed. In fact, anytime I brought up what I needed or would like, it was met with ridicule, shaming, and erasure. These demands and forms of service by B became more and more extreme with time, to the point of where I was put in a position of doing things that were extremely outside of my comfort zone. This scar is an example of the mark left by B during our time as sexual partners.

Fig 24: "Marked" (Bear)

Despite the mutually communicative environment of their initial kink arrangement, the evolution of Bear's role into one characterized by assault, and "demands and forms of service," not dissimilar to the emotional and sexual labour described by Tate and Quiet, further compels readers to consider how violence can be obscured in seemingly communicative and consensual spaces.

Tate, Quiet, and Bear's personal lives, like their work lives, are characterized by precarity, the need for flexibility, gendered expectations of communication, and both the

valorization and resistance of individual "hard work." Consequently, their stories are powerful commentaries on how the particularities of emotional labour can be obscured in the process of doing good work for our communities and our partners, resulting in increased exposure to violent systems, as well as violent partners.

3.3 "monogamy under gift-wrapping: "Challenging Relationship Hierarchies and The Egalitarian Ideal

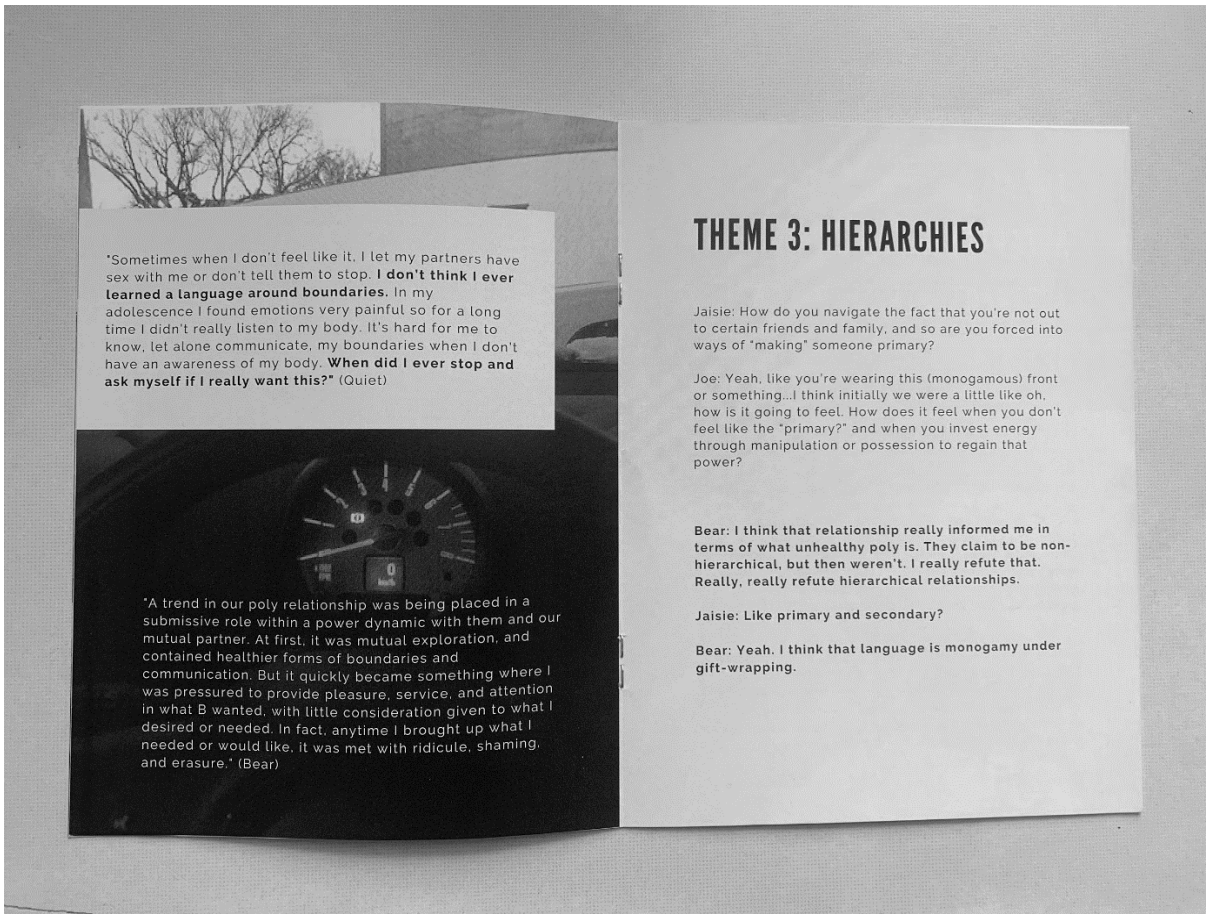


Fig 25: "Exhibit Zine: Theme 3 (right)"

This section is based on the theme *Hierarchies* (Figure 25) that three collaborators created from their stories: the complex process of leaving abuse after their mutual polyamorous partner was driven away that Bear outlines in "Breaking Away"; negotiating the power dynamics of primary/secondary stereotypes with their non-residential partner in Joe's "Secondary"; and finally, the disparities in financial privileges between partners in Simon's

"Ash." Tracing moments where power has surfaced in their relationships, Bear and Joe's stories in particular highlight the pressures to "wear a monogamous front" (Joe) and the "silent pressure to conform to heteronormative monogamous ideals" (Bear), which have largely influenced their approaches to (anti)violence.

Bear, grounds their experience through a painting they created during an abusive relationship with a married couple:

This photo displays an acrylic painting I did in the last 3 months of a previous relationship. I was dealing with a lot of depression, anxiety, and indecision at that point. I was somewhat aware of how unhappy I was, but didn't want to admit that it was due to the emotional, psychological, and sexual abuse I was enduring. At this point B had driven away our previously mutual poly partner, so it was just them and myself. At the time, I more easily molded into what they wanted me to be. I remember struggling during that time, and with this painting, trying to get the details right, and going over small portions of it repeatedly. I was always pushed by my partner at the time to change what I was doing, how I was doing it. This piece was something I really did on my own, for the first time in a while. It wasn't until the last month of my relationship, when I had gained clarity on how I was feeling and where it actually stemmed from, did I really understand what this piece was doing for me, and meant to me. I recall finishing this piece in the solitude of the basement, contemplating on what to do with my situation, where was the line for me in terms of what I was willing to tolerate. I was scared, depressed, anxious, angry, exhausted. To me, this piece really reflects that struggle to break away from the abuse I was enduring.

Fig 26: "Breaking Away" (Bear)

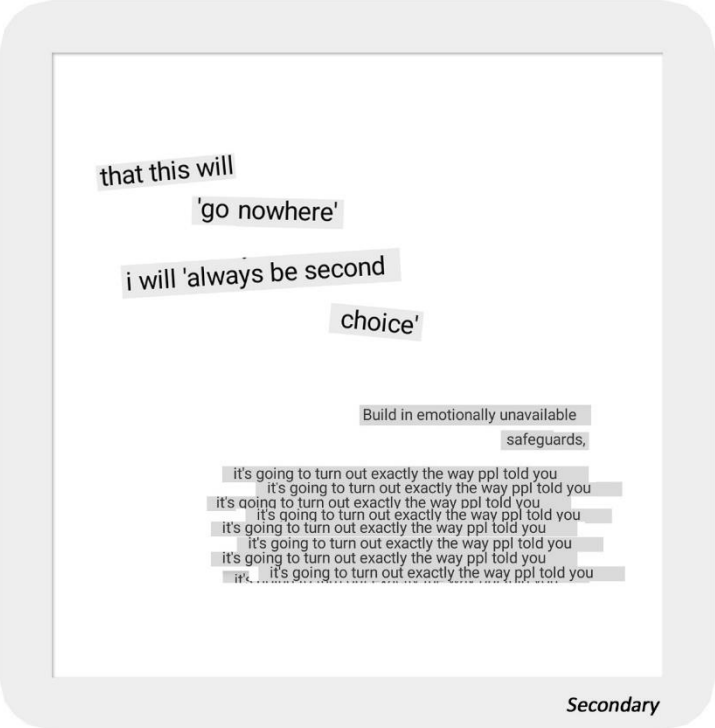
Articulating the particularities of abuse in their context, they explain:

> At the beginning the relationship was very egalitarian between the two of them…they were very important to me equally. But B was almost undermining my relationship with [the other partner], in a subtle but intentional way, by feeding me information, feeding discord into our relationship, projecting issues about their relationship onto my relationship with them, and to the point where it was a subtle form of manipulation over time, left on simmer until that relationship weakened, and then they left their partner.

Challenging the unchecked power dynamics of egalitarianism is thus central to how Bear has come to understand their abuse, as well as "what unhealthy poly is," resulting from their partners presenting themselves as "non-hierarchical, very healthy, well put together, and unified." As Donovan and Hester explain in their study of emotion work in domestically abusive relationships, "The egalitarian ideal" is a reflexive commitment to finding ways of doing relationships that aspire to egalitarianism, often coupled with an understanding that opportunities to pursue this ideal are easier for queer relationships because of gendered expectations about how relationships should be practiced.[189] Yet, while constructions of non/monogamies contrast an image of traditional, rigid, and hierarchical relationships, their ethical, flexible, and egalitarian principles can be weaponized in the context of social difference. Strongly refuting hierarchical relationships, Bear describes primary/secondary language as "monogamy under gift-wrapping," that undermines the purpose of polyamory through assigning partner value, "measuring" work, care, and commitment. According to Bear, this can look like: "I have a deep relationship with you, but you're at a .6% because I have my primary, and this is the max value I can have with you as a secondary. It undermines your ability to make closer connections, and very much limits you. That's what I saw a lot of in this [relationship]. This false idea of egalitarian poly." Now aware that power dynamics often resist attempts at egalitarianism, or that people may not necessarily have the social resources for egalitarianism, Bear asserts that their experience of abuse "has informed a lot of the non-monogamous relationships I have now, and potential violence in future relationships. The idea of what you present as versus what you are has set huge shields against violence for me."

[189] Catherine Donovan and Marianne Hester, "Exploring Emotion Work in Domestically Abusive Relationships," in *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives*, ed. Janice L. Ristock (New York: Routledge, 2011).

Joe also describes his experiences of navigating relationship hierarchies with his partner C:



This photo displays edited clippings from conversations I've had over text with my non-residential partner during challenging parts of our relationship. As I navigate both of my relationships, assumptions about primary vs secondary hierarchies often crop up both externally and internally. At times, friends rely on this structure to understand how my relationships work on a functional level. Other times, participants in the relationships experience insecurity as a result of these stereotypes. While I realize that many polyamorous folks do identify with this concept, I try to take a more balanced approach in that when I'm with my partner, they are my priority. Obviously life is complicated, and navigating more than one relationship takes some finesse, compassion, and empathy on the part of everyone involved.

Fig 27: "**Secondary" (Joe)**

In the biography he chose to provide for the group, Joe further explains the rationale for his photograph:

> I am curious as to how power and power balances/imbalances influence romantic decision making, the many forms violence can manifest within a relationship, as well as how men are socialized to uphold toxic behaviour and thought patterns. As a man, I'm trying to diffuse that responsibility of power, and rethink what care means. Now existing within the sphere of non-monogamy, I am also very interested in ways to rethink theories that support the ideas of the "primary / secondary" partnerships within non-monogamy.

Joe makes important connections between his gender, the legacy of relationship stereotypes they are inheriting, and the challenging decisions they are making as partners and metamours.

Discussing his role in mediating his partner's gendered insecurities, Joe elaborates on concepts of "home" and residential partner labels:

> Joe: that was something we had to navigate pretty early on, 'cause that was a criticism C was feeling from her friends… "oh, you're just the Secondary— you'll never be a priority", you know? This is never really going anywhere...I think it really helped to reinforce with my partners how when I'm with you I'm present, and when I'm with my music and my work I'm present. Just because I'm at my place of residence I'm not like staring lovingly into N's eyes 16 hours a day... I'm giving 2 hours to this, 2 hours to that, 2 hours to N, and tomorrow, 2 hours to C, you know? It's like a pie or something (both laugh).
>
> Jaisie: Is that primary/secondary thing something you've had to talk about quite a lot?
>
> Joe: *Everyone* wants to talk about that.

His thoughts about the rationalization of time and affection contrast with Bear's discussion of this as an enactment of power, and yet, both collaborators are using this as a strategy to reduce hierarchies in the contexts of their lives. Yet, the engagement of Joe's partner C's friends in safeguarding against the power dynamics of relationship hierarchies was striking to me as he works to build security with his non-residential partner, including sleepovers and spending time with C's friends. Joe additionally recalls how he and his partner N discussed their plan for potential possessive or manipulative feelings as an early anti-violence strategy against hierarchies:

> I think [possession] is a bit of a theme that has been explored as a result. I think initially we were a little like oh, how is it going to feel. How does it feel when you don't feel like the "primary?" and when you invest energy through manipulation or possession to regain that power? Yeah I think that was in the early stages we were talking about that. It was all in theory. In practice it's a real thing, but it comes and goes, and every time it comes and goes you get better at navigating those feelings, as long as you're cool with communicating that you feel a little left in the dust.

Interrupting victim/perpetrator dyads and centering power dynamics, Joe and N's conversation demonstrates how they resist heteronormative stereotypes of possession by treating them as an unshameful *inevitability* and working on them compassionately, together.

Importantly, Joe and I discuss the mechanisms that encourage primary/secondary dynamics, including not being "out" to certain friends and family, which, to him, is "like you're wearing this monogamous front or something." In particular, Joe identifies the social context of practicing non/monogamies in Southern Alberta, punctuated by legacies of "polygamy and religious fundamentalists," as a primary way relationship hierarchies have been reaffirmed for him, C, and N. Joe clarifies, "coming from the Bible Belt? That doesn't bother me. I'm not looking for validation. But it does bother me in the sense that I know that's the first thing my mum is going to think of."

In contrast to Bear and Joe, Simon's resistance to relationship hierarchies hinges on the material and social disparities they experienced with an ex-partner, as they outline in Figure 28:

I took this picture of the lawn outside of our old apartment building. That grass was quite disgusting; people would just throw used cigarette butts and beer cans out their window and onto the grass, along with dog waste and other garbage. I had to enter our apartment by crossing this lawn, where my partner could use the front door, he held the only set of keys, even though we lived there together. This grass represents the disparity in our privileges. He came from a very wealthy family, so all of his finances and schooling were looked after. He never had to worry about not having enough money.

Fig 28: "Ash" (Simon)

Beyond their lack of accessibility to their residence, Simon informs me of times their financial disparity would lead to situations where their partner threatened their safety:

> I was and still am in poverty, however I was expected to pay for a majority of things; groceries, household items, and everything we did on dates. He would use his financial advantage against me often. There were times when we would be downtown Calgary, and he would want to go to very expensive restaurants, he would threaten me, if I didn't pay the bill he would desert me, especially when we were far

> from home, and late at night. Those instances reinforced my beliefs that I desperately needed my partner and his love, otherwise I would end up in very dangerous situations, without him there to save me. This is why I now work so hard to dismantle power dynamics in my sexual, romantic, and platonic relationships.

Identifying these situations of abuse was challenging at the time, particularly due to Simon's awareness of their white privilege: "he was Indian and I'm white, so there's that difference in privilege as well. All of those intersections really affected our relationship." Since this relationship, Simon views non/monogamies a lot differently, particularly where there's a felt presence of hierarchies, power, and isolation: "I practice communicating with my partners and friends a lot more regularly, discussing our needs and wants from our relationships, being vulnerable about feelings of insecurity or jealousy, and unlearning toxic aspects of monogamy, which has been ingrained into us since childhood."

Together, Bear, Joe, and Simon extend discussions around the disproportionate influence that heteronormative couple privilege and associated hierarchies have in polynormative communities, highlighting the ways that histories, labour, identity, place, and power, matter for addressing anti-violence in contexts of non/monogamies.

3.4 Queernormativities and Cultures of (Non)Consent

Fig 29: "Exhibit Zine: Theme 4"

This section is based on the theme *Acceptable Forms/Stereotypes/Expectations of Queerness* (Figure 29) that collaborators generated from two of their overlapping stories: a normalized experience of sexual assault at a queer event depicted in Quiet's "Night Out"; and ongoing kink-shaming as a site of abuse in Simon's "Subcutaneous." The meeting points of their experiences delineate the negotiation of (un)belonging and normalcy in Lethbridge, and the ways that non/monogamies punctuate the lack of attention to social difference within queer communities therein, extending the geopolitical and identity-based analyses collaborators introduced in *Rethinking Violence.* While these stories prominently characterize

and directly address this theme, the politics of queerness are woven into the conversations and processes of all collaborators. As Simon describes, this theme encompasses "what we have to say about non-violence, and how our queerness or non-queerness plays a part in those stories."

This is a photo of my partner's shoe. Their shoes got dirty one night when we went out three years ago and they've never cleaned or wore the shoes since. The shoes just sit in the corner of our back hall.

Fig 30: "Night Out" (Quiet)

Quiet recounts how this night was "a significant event in [their] relationships and how [they] (don't) navigate queer communities/spaces," describing the details of their sexual assault in a queer community venue:

> My current partner and I were dating this other person and we all went out to a local queer space. I hadn't been there much before, and the two of us hadn't been dating the other person for long so I cared a lot about what they thought. Later in the night I was really drunk and me, my partner, the person we were dating, and their partner at the time were some of the only people left. I felt sick so I went to the bathroom and threw up. I remember being anxious, about being too drunk and getting sick but also just anxious to be in a queer space. I wanted people to like me and think I was "cool" or whatever. I didn't (don't) feel very valid in these spaces cause I'm pretty femme presenting, and I often date masculine presenting people, so I just feel like I don't belong.

Quiet shares how they returned from the bathroom to everyone in the room having sex, including someone involved with operating the establishment. Too drunk to consent, they

discuss fooling around with their date and their long-term partner, and being assaulted by their metamour without protection, and without asking. Emphasizing what they are hoping to communicate with their photograph, Quiet remarks on the normalcy of their assault: “At the time I was very drunk...no one asked me if I was ok. I try not to think about it. It’s like the shoes in the corner – a mess my partner and I have never really cleaned up or addressed.” Reflecting on how the experience has been addressed since then, they say, “it’s only ever come up in passing, like talking about “public sex at a party” like “we’ve done that there” but I’m not like “it was actually really awful and traumatic” but also before this project I hadn’t really thought about it like that, so maybe I wouldn’t have those conversations.” Quiet’s description of their assault as “public sex at a party” is a compelling critique of the lack of explanatory power that mainstream violence narratives hold for many queer people.

“Night Out” is a powerful and familiar story, shaped by homonormativities and queer (un)belonging in Lethbridge, as well as the flattening of “queer” and the lack of attention to social difference within queer community spaces. Describing their resistance to the hypersexualization of these spaces, Quiet articulates, “you have to want [sex and experimentation] all of the time— this is what we’re like,” further calling into question of identity politics, demands on identity, and the behaviours that can be legitimized under “queer” and “non/monogamous.”

Consent is the principle that perhaps goes the farthest towards legitimizing “Consensual Non-Monogamy” in the eyes of its practitioners. My own experiences with assault in my open relationship were often discussed as breaches of contract agreements both during and after-the-fact, by both my partner and I, and our extended queer community. The clearest example of this was when my ex-partner had unprotected sex with their ‘friend with benefits,’ then later had unprotected sex with me, despite safe sex being one of our “rules.” After a couple of days my ex-partner admitted this to me, after I could sense something was

wrong. I remember feeling incredibly violated, however, my attempts to discuss this were met with the idea that I was simply too controlling, not flexible enough, and even not supportive of them exploring sex with partners of other genders. When Quiet shared their assault, and its conceptualization as "public sex at a party," I could not help but be haunted by my own, and see the shared dismissal of our experiences in light of "agreements," queer sex, and sexual experimentation. Something, that I'm still struggling to articulate, can happen in the spaces where misuses of power and vocal consent culture meet, that dilutes and reduces assault to something incoherent and excusable. Quiet's inquiry into their own experience of assault at a queer event elucidates very clearly the limits of contractual consent in spaces where understandings of power are still emergent.

As well as prompting important understanding and theorizing about the complexities of assault and consent in queer non/monogamous contexts, Quiet communicated the challenge of knowing their story may be understood as speaking out against a queer space that was so long *fought* for. Overwhelmingly, queer social life in Lethbridge takes the form of small dinner parties, house parties, and events that require people to have existing social networks in order to be included. Recent attempts to disrupt the dominant culture of privacy at work in the city have centered on Pride parades, and events offered by the venue in "Night Out," which until 2019, were also advertised through closed membership listservs. Indeed, Quiet shares how they "still go sometimes to that space because there isn't much else." While queer (in)visibility is discussed by scholars and activists who have researched and organized in Lethbridge, Quiet's story in combination with my own experiences over the last decade, highlights how the differences between visibility, belonging, and power existing between, amidst, and in-between queer people in Lethbridge are relatively absent from local queer event-planning, advocacy, and anti-violence initiatives.

In her work on LGBTQ visibility in Lethbridge, Muller-Myrdahl suggests, "In small cities in particular, strategies to facilitate a sense of queer belonging must be considered with a critical eye to what may, in another context, be read as homonormative or apolitical."[190] Despite licensed venues constituting a meaningful social space for many queer adults for identity formation and exploration, moving freely, and meeting potential partners, identities are inherently tied to spaces as being sites for identity construction and power relations. Therefore, queer venues in Lethbridge function in a paradoxical manner, where they present both a space where consensual sexual activity can be engaged in safely, as well as a space that leaves people vulnerable to unwanted sexual experiences and assault.[191] Like Tate previously theorized, Quiet's story emphasizes the role of space and place in mediating sexual violence in queer non/monogamous community. Moreover, Quiet's story illustrates a heterotopian critique: that ostensibly safe and queer spaces can both mirror and disrupt normative violences, which must be fully understood and embraced if liberatory relationship movements want to re-envision safety.

Simon, who was particularly interested in the acceptable "forms" of queerness reflected in the title of this section, tells their story of kink-shaming and assault from a former partner:

[190] Myrdahl, "Visibility on Their Own Terms?," 43.
[191] Bianca Fileborn, "Accounting for Space, Place and Identity: GLBTIQ Young Adults' Experiences and Understandings of Unwanted Sexual Attention in Clubs and Pubs," *Critical Criminology* 22, no. 1 (2014): 81-97, https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-013-9221-4.

I'm wearing a padded suit in this picture. I wear it under clothing to appear and feel bigger. "Fat suits" are usually seen as problematic, because they are used to make fun of fat people, however, it is a source of comfort for me, because it allows me to envision what my body goals are for the future. I belong to a kink community of people that purposely gain weight, as in fat. It's partially sexual for me, but more than that, it stems from a desire to modify my body in a way that feels good and affirms who I am, and want to be. I express this kink in self-love and to recover from anorexia.

I am nervous about sharing this photo, because it is me admitting something that goes directly against what society teaches us about thinness and beauty. However, it is important to my story about non-monogamy and violence because this kink is intertwined in every part of my life. My partner knew I was a "gainer" and he told me he accepted me for it, but he warned me that if people found out I was purposely getting fat they would think I was disgusting; he would be the only one who could ever love me. Those words instilled shame and fear in me, enforcing those beliefs that I could not be non-monogamous, and that I could not survive without him.

Fig 31: "Subcutaneous" (Simon)

Echoing the messages Bear conveyed in "Marked," Simon continues: "[my partner] was wanting his own interests explored or gratified but I was either shamed for being who I was, or just not having any interest in talking about it. As one guest remarked during the PhotoVoice exhibit, "[Simon's photo] is so challenging and important to read, as someone who has spent their entire life being shamed, abused, and objectified for being fat. I appreciate this honesty. It elicits a really visceral fear response in me, and I want to interrogate that more." Ultimately, after coming out publicly as a Gainer and experiencing positivity and "meaningful discussions with people about their relationships to bodies and food," Simon hopes their story conveys the ways in which normative constructions of bodies, and both privilege and shaming tactics in queer kink spaces, can fuel violence for non/monogamous people in Lethbridge.

3.5 Creating Change

Fig 32: "Exhibit Zine: Theme 5"

In this final theme, I bring together the solidarities, as well as what is *not yet here,* that I see in collaborators' inquiries, as a partial vision for anti-violence in queer non/monogomous communities in Lethbridge. As with the previous themes, "Creating Change" was developed through consensus by collaborators in the *Group Curation* process. Here, I focus on the strategies for challenging essentialism Lily discusses at a pleasure-based event in "Do you have a moment to talk about fuck buddies?," as well as the defiance of relationship norms Lily captures in "My House is Warm and Full of Queers." Following this, Jingle's "Foreign Territory," Quiet's "Having Fun" and excerpts of my conversation with Bear highlight the transformative possibilities of reimagining state responses to violence, intergenerational learning, and metamour support. Together these stories trouble definitions of violence, as well as conventional heteronormative models of relationship violence, asking

queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge to imagine healing, prevention, and intervention, differently.

3.5.1 Re-defining Queer Space: "beyond polyamory, friends with benefits, and hookup culture."

Lily's final photograph relays their experience of discussing non/monogamies and trans identity at a pleasure event they attended:

This is a basket of conversation starters at a local sex and pleasure positive feminist event. Non-monogamy came up as a topic at one point and as one of the few "out" non-monogamous people who was in attendance I ended up talking about my experiences and thoughts to a lot of monogamous people in a space where people were looking to learn. It felt empowering. This isn't a conversation I really like to have. It's not fun to bring it up before a date, it's not fun to talk about it to my biological parents, it's not fun to explain myself to someone interrogating my boundaries around my relationships. But it did feel safe on this day, in this space.

It felt empowering to be able to open up this conversation beyond just talking about "polyamory," friends with benefits, and hookup culture. The ideals around ethical non-monogamy are not limited to non-monogamy in their practice. I think the world would be better if monogamous people could engage in their monogamous relationships with the same communication and awareness that a lot of non-monogamous people do, rather than taking those things for granted in a committed and often possessive relationship structure.

Fig 33: "Do you have a moment to talk about fuck buddies?" (Lily)

Here, Lily identifies several strategies that anchor their intimate experiences at negotiating both pleasure and violence in public spaces aimed at creating change. Opening up conversations beyond just talking about "polyamory, friends with benefits, and hookup culture," Lily remarks how this space embraced trauma-based perspectives and experiences of past and present violence as a part of how attendees found and discussed pleasure, as well

as moved past the limits of strictly polyamorous or non/monogamous events. Indeed, polyamorous identity as a political unifier, rather than shared political and intimate goals, has its challenges, especially due to the predominance of white, college-educated, middle-class practitioners of polyamory. As Noel reveals in their study of 12 polyamory texts, "In isolating around common identity and evading a thorough examination of cultural privilege, current polyamorous theory and practice greatly limits its potential to transform relationships, families and communities currently rooted in systemic oppressions."[192]

Lily exemplifies the way the event challenged identity limits and embraced trauma-informed perspectives further in our interview. They describe how facilitators of this event engaged attendees in intentionally polarizing questions, such as "would you rather be blindfolded or gagged" or "choked or spanked" in order to tease out the complexities that these conversations require. Because of who was invited to be in the room, these prompts led to discussions about practicing consent in non/monogamies, and being romantically and sexually intimate with trans partners. Revealing the inextricably related work of kink, anti-violence advocacy, and trans and queer perspectives of intimacy, Lily shares: "I was hoping that if people had a trans partner they would feel more comfortable how to interact with them and what they would expect from them, which I feel is itself a work of anti-violence action." In practice, Lily describes how they engaged both monogamous and non/monogamous attendees with the pressures many trans people feel to behave sexually, and the expectations around anatomy and sexual roles, affirming, "people are hurt by assuming people's gender and their identities, and people are just as hurt by people assuming their sexual preferences, ...even if I just caused some of the cis people there to pause and maybe ask "what is comfortable on your body before I touch you anywhere?" that is directly related to making

[192] Noel, "Progressive Polyamory," 615.

trans people safer in sex."

The importance Lily emphasizes of moving past essentialized conceptions of identity, community, and pleasure contrasts with Quiet's story of queer (un)belonging in "Night Out" and the normalized experience of sexual assault with their partners at a queer event that they describe. As opposed to a collectivity generated from the possibilities promised by queer identity, Lily's event felt queer in *practice,* as they explain:

> that felt like a very radical space for me, that we were challenging what's allowed to be talked about, who gets to talk about it, whose voices get to be heard, not just ciswomen talking about pleasure...anyone could be there and be heard, and that different voices on monogamy could be there and... give people ideas about what non-monogamy means. I think there's people who aren't actually non-monogamous, or even queer, but still engage in those things in a very similar way.

Lily's push to challenge reductionist approaches to queerness, non/monogamies, and harm reduction is also felt in "My House is Warm and Full of Queers:"

To make queer spaces is to consecrate hallowed ground. It is everything.
Whether it is one moment or a whole sanctuary
It is to provide a hearth to those who are marginalized,
to create a space where they are in a moment, everyone in the world. My existence is to make space. It is to carve out my sanctuary in this world. This world was not meant for me, for us, it seems. My defiance is to believe otherwise and make a small world where that can be at least temporarily forgotten. To push what is queer beyond the confines of my body, to these walls, and beyond those.

Fig 34: "My House is Warm and Full of Queers" (Lily)

Lily explains how the practice of sustaining queer sanctuaries, for them, are hinged on transformative intimacy, imaginations, and earnest acts of care that move past "social anxiety and agoraphobia:"

> I write this on a night when I run care packages of Gravol and sickly snacks to trans friends sick with a stomach flu. That may sound like an unrelated fact, but it quite accurately describes the theme that this photo represents. Those sick trans people don't have friends who can run them to the pharmacy. Their families are hours away, if they have one. We create resilient communities when we look after each other. When we create space. When we take this situation we're in seriously, and act tenderly towards our chosen family whether they are lovers, partners, or dear friends. The choices we make to create space matter. They create ripples. So many queer relationships, whether they are friendships, monogamies, or non-monogamies seem stifled by social anxiety and agoraphobia. I feel compelled to try and push past that. I want to imagine more for us. That we can be there for each other when we need it. That we don't have to suffer without traditional family or relationship structures without an alternative. I want to wish a better future is possible for the people and communities I love, and I want to believe that we start to get there when we offer space, when we care for each other, when we love earnestly and in disregard of normativity. I think we all have an opportunity to heal collectively through that. I want to hope. I need to.

Lily's caption holds together both the sadness and sustenance that queer collective resilience can actualize— a resiliency that challenges social norms around individualism, caregiving, intimacy, friendship, partnership, and family. Therefore, Lily's theories and practices for "creating change" are defined by the intimate refusal of heteronormative and nuclear models of care.

3.5.2 Re-Imagining State Responses to Violence

Jingle, Quiet, and Bear all expressed how the tensions of police neglect and reporting, and the lack of alternative dispute resolution models, contributed towards their experiences of violence in non/monogamous contexts. Jingle tells the story of being coerced into sex after recently deciding to open up their relationship with their primary partner:

During my visit to [country], I developed a platonic relationship with one of my tour guides. He eventually forced sex on me twice, once the night after I got this tattoo, and once the week prior. Following my tattoo appointment, I was filled with confusion, guilt, and regret. I was unhappy with the way my tattoo turned out, with my lack of assertiveness regarding the corrections I would have liked to have made to the artwork, and I beat myself up over the permanence of this mistake. It took me several weeks, and the return to Lethbridge, to separate the tattoo from my emotional response and see both the tattoo, and the experiences surrounding it, objectively. I realized that I was in fact quite happy with the tattoo, despite its imperfections, and that there was no reason for me to hold on to guilt and regret. Instead, I began to see the tattoo as a symbol of strength and resilience. I survived it, and I am determined to keep the lessons I learned in the process embedded in my solar plexus, alongside this beautiful piece of artwork, permanently.

Fig 35: "Foreign Territory" (Jingle)

Jingle's approach to resilience, that has incorporated the reclamation of their body and skin, was a profound point of connection for an exhibit guest, who offers Jingle's tattoo as a transmuted symbol in the story of Ganesha:

> Obviously there's no way of me knowing for sure, but it seems that this tattoo is capturing the likeness of Ganesha. In Hinduism, Ganesha is known as the remover of obstacles. There are many different stories about how he got his elephant head, but one of the most common is that his father, Lord Shiva, cut off his head without knowing he was doing so to his own son. When Ganesha's mother, Parvati, ordered Shiva to find a new head, the god brought back that of an elephant, and revived their child. It's powerful to me that this image, of a deity whose life began with forcible violence, who went on to devote his existence to removing obstacles for others, is the connection to this kind of violence in this person's reality. It's meaningful that it was transmuted into this symbol, which feels so true to the energy of Ganesha.

This guest's focus on "removing obstacles for others" turns attention once more to the collective lens of (anti)violence that all collaborators and guests urge and advocate for.

In our interview, Jingle expresses that perhaps the most significant barrier to healing

from and negotiating the complexities of their assault involves their hesitancy to reporting, and desires for normalized opportunities to discuss harm and reconciliation. Jingle I talk about these concerns:

> Jingle: This whole trip was like this overwhelm of not knowing how to deal with these emotions. I couldn't talk to anyone about it because the only person I could talk to on the trip was the person that caused the problems.
>
> Jaisie: That you relied on for social support!
>
> Jingle: [My primary partner] was really mad at the tour guide and wanted me to report him and get him fired, but I was like, I don't want to do that. I don't feel good about ruining somebody's career even if it's warranted. It just didn't feel right, so I didn't want to do that.
>
> Jaisie: In terms of reporting...if there were other options, would those feel better?
>
> Jingle: I don't think he realized what he was doing. I don't know [country] culture, and I was being flirty, and I know that, and there was a language barrier. There could have been miscommunication. I don't know his side. I just know on my side it felt like a violation. But I don't know if that was his intention, and I think intentions matter.
>
> Jaisie: Yeah, I think the fact that all people across all cultures aren't taught consent means that often violence or violations happen even when people don't understand what's happening. I think both can exist at once, for sure.
>
> Jingle: Mhmm. Yeah. That's why I didn't want to get him fired. If there was a way I could communicate with him and understand if he knew what was happening, and if he didn't, explain how I felt, or how that affected me, that would feel better. There was such a lack of knowledge from both sides.

Jingle's story provoked a lot of unresolved feelings for me, both as a survivor of violence, as well as a researcher aware that Jingle's understanding of "cultural" or "foreign" interpretations of consent might perpetuate racist stereotypes. Reading the transcript, I'm still reminded of the ways I have been victim-blamed through myths of flirtatiousness and potential "miscommunications"; however, I am most uneasy about my instinct to ensure Jingle challenged these othering ideas as opposed to emotionally supporting their disclosure. It is in moments like these that I am reminded of the inseparability of, and interference from,

my roles as a survivor, crisis worker, and researcher, and the struggle for their harmonious coexistence.

In their disclosure Jingle acknowledges that, despite working through their impulses to blame themselves, they recognize the possibilities for growth, justice, and understanding, that were not afforded to them. As Jingle displays in “Consensual Violence,” they have shifted some of the anger and lack of resolve associated with these memories, incorporating new approaches to partner safety, and experimenting with consent through (non)movement in platonic spaces of rope-play:

I am intrigued by the idea that I can control the way I perceive a stereotypically violent situation, simply by flipping the viewpoint. Rope for me is a way to get into a meditative state, release the worries of the day, collaborate with another person. It’s one of the ways I express intimacy with romantic and platonic partners. Most of the time I don’t do a lot of active moving, and someone else has control over my physical body, while I have the freedom to give and revoke any consent at any time. We communicate the whole time. Through rope I’ve learned a lot of things about what I'm capable of, what I enjoy, what I don't enjoy, and how to express those things so that it doesn’t come across as the other person's fault if something is not working. It’s been a communication tool, as well as a self care tool. I started it with platonic friends, and then introduced my primary partner to it as well. It opened up the idea that non-monogamies can take place in "vanilla" relationships and "kinky" relationships, and everywhere in between, at any level of intimacy. One has the freedom to establish and maintain any kind of relationships they please, not only the societal norms. It was eye opening for me, and really eye opening for my primary partner as well.

Fig 36: “Consensual Violence” (Jingle)

Jingle’s story about platonic consent exploration created an impression with guests as well, as one exclaims: “I've never considered doing this with platonic friends! Amazing!”

Engaging in rope-play with Jingle's primary partner has enabled him to work through lingering possessive and gender-normative attitudes. According to Jingle, "He was raised religious, so this has been a really big shift for him...He doesn't practice the religion anymore, and hasn't for a long time, but there's so much of it reflected in how he sees the world and his values." Due to this, Jingle reflects on how "there was a power dynamic that he was expecting" in their relationship. "He was anticipating that he had to be chivalrous, take care of the financial matters, carry heavy things for me... It's a process to get to the point where we can both openly share, it's not a feminine thing to share emotions."

The benefits of rope-play for Jingle also extend beyond unlearning heteronormative stereotypes with their romantic partner. They explain the "fluid level of relationships" rope-play facilitates, including the one Jingle shares with their main rope top, who they aren't romantic or physical with outside of rope: "We sometimes hang out platonically as friends, or go to social gatherings. He ties me in rope, and that's pretty much it. His partner, she also ties me, but we have a bit of a romantic relationship." Jingle's experience of learning consent with the help of metamours and platonic partners represents a broader and ambivalent theme throughout the project, as these people have often occupied challenging and contradictory roles for collaborators- either avoiding or enabling abusive partner behaviour. Jingle sheds more light on this after a prompt about safety in non/monogamous relationships:

> Jaisie: Do you think being non/monogamous influences how you explore safety?
>
> Jingle: With non-monogamies there's a lot more potential for infringements of boundaries, just because it's a lot of different people, and the boundaries you set with one person I may not have explained yet to another person. The other thing that I think is different in terms of support systems is that if there was something that happened now with my community, to me or someone else, it's definitely really supportive. Everyone would band together, and you would have more than one person you could confide in. At this point in time I would have so many different resources, because I have intimate relationships with so many people. That was a big benefit of non-monogamies for me. In high school, I didn't have any other friends,

> and so moving into non-monogamies gave me a sense of community that I didn't have before.

Indeed, the support network Jingle participates in has been identified by The National Abuse Hotline as an incredibly effective method of violence prevention in polyamorous contexts, where built-in support network of intimate partners and metamours can be a resource for both emotional support and end-of-relationship safety planning. Together, both of Jingle's inquiries signal the need for those less represented by (mono)heterornormative frameworks to have a voice in re-defining community responses to violence.

The final inquiry in "Re-Imagining State Responses to Violence" is "Having Fun," which centres Quiet's critiques of law enforcement following their experience of queerphobia and property damage:

It's easier to say I'm having a fun time rather than having some pretty shitty things happen. This friend was significant, at the time this photo was taken she was dating, and living with, my one partner who doesn't live with me.

Fig 37: "Having Fun" (Quiet)

Quiet tells me that this friend, their metamour, sent them "a bunch of abusive messages," prompted by their non-residential partner's refusal to move cities with the person in the photograph. According to Quiet, these messages, which "said a lot of hateful things,"

suggested Quiet and their other partner end their lives, and heavily featured homophobia and threats: "…I didn't know she was homophobic before this, but she started using all sorts of slurs and threatening that she would hurt us if she ever saw us… Before this we had been best of friends, like, we had tattoos together. We had a lot of intimate moments in our friendship." The assault Quiet's metamour enacted further complicates the positions that fellow metamours are put in, often in the crosshairs of intimate partner violence.

However, the assault, as Quiet describes, was further complicated by police involvement. Following a house break-in and the destruction of Quiet's partner's property the local police were contacted to intervene, but the officer knew their metamour's father— a dynamic Quiet critiques as representative of a law enforcement "boys club." Ignoring the ongoing displays of violence by their metamour, to which they understand to be heavily gendered practice in violence prevention responses involving femme partners, Quiet concludes, "[the police] enabled her violence for sure. Yeah, like, don't call the police."

The gendered practices of police involvement are also highlighted by Bear, who shares their resistance the marking of law enforcement as "peace officers." Referring back to a time they sought help from law enforcement during their abusive triad, Bear clarifies the ways in which their partner weaponized their knowledge of the lack of training and support available through police and social services to their advantage, as well as the gendered and mental health assumptions they would make:

> At that point I called a peace officer to meet me at the house. The "peace officer" didn't meet me ahead of time- they just went to the house and talked with the partner first. They told the peace officer this narrative that I was delusional and how I have FASD, that they're a social worker, and they just can't tolerate being with me as a partner, and how I'm lying. My partner worked in the social work field and knew this officer, so they used this position of power to leverage it against me, to the point where the officer blew me off. Even talking about physical differences too- they were shorter than me, I'm really broad shouldered, and so this officer couldn't imagine how they were abusing me.

The legitimacy their partner leverages as a social worker speaks to the mirror-image surveillance models employed by state services, despite all to often being situated as distinct. Indeed, Bear had a lot to say about the dismal state of well-resourced social supports for non/monogamous communities:

> The current state of our social services is pretty dismal to be honest. And that's looking from a heterosexual monogamous lens. If you expand that to being poly or non-monogamous, and queer, most social services and intervention services don't know how to navigate that, or even act towards you as a person. They don't know how to process it, or objectively look at a situation and analyse it to consider different factors or come to conclusions. If you look at a heteronormative monogamous relationship there's a lot of factors built into social services to conclude that someone is going through abuse, but not enough for non-monogamous relationships.

Bear instead advocates for a community support model based on open dialogue, proactive support, and nuanced role modeling of "what healthy relationships really look like" for non/monogamous communities. In order to acknowledge the complex emotional spaces of abuse, Bear suggests a shift away from "red flags" and intervention towards proactivity, asserting: "That's where community really needs to head- proactive, preventative, support. Being like "we as a community can see this, what can we do to help"- not intervene but help check in on the people we care about. I would like to see that way more." Deeper than this, Bear identifies the challenges and opportunities that the rural intergenerational landscape of small rural cities like Lethbridge present.

> I don't think we see a lot of visibility, language, or discourse on non-monogamy in the community… It's partially the area we are in, and the age we are in. Poly is practiced a lot more, but there's still not a lot of language around it. There's still not a lot of understanding, and a lot of people in the older queer community are attached to heteronormative monogamous ideals, so expressing queer through that lens… and so it's informing younger generations, and hard to break that cycle.

As the Photovoice exhibit was viewed by many members of the "older queer community" Bear's comment partially intervenes in this cycle, creating an opening to explore spaces of important multigenerational and intergenerational social exchange, as a locus of

empowerment, healthy conflict, and resistance to gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence.

It is clear through the five themes that the scales of "creating change" for queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge must be simultaneously individual, collective, and structural. Instructive, political, and directive— collaborator's inquiries are full of lessons on where to begin energizing this change.

From Quiet we learn that metamours can be unexpected and unchallenged actors of violence, but that multiple partners build both material and emotional resilience against the neglect and violence of law enforcement. From Bear and Quiet we learn about the complexities of identity-based abuse tactics, often happening in queer spaces and venues, as well as the limitations of contractual and egalitarian consent models. However, from Lily and Bear we begin to see pathways through this complexity: whether through intergenerational and multigenerational learning, or by questioning identity as a locus for organizing and defining non/monogamous space.

From Tate, who role models both compassion and confrontation, we learn more about the urgency to include geospatial and embodied contexts into narratives of intimate violence, as well as the interplay of capitalism, colonialism, and gender in non/monogamous relationships. From Bear, Jingle, and Simon, we learn about the fragmented ways kink can offer both harm and intervention: while Bear's subordinate roles were weaponized, Jingle's rope-play became a space where wants, capabilities, and networks of platonic partners, were realized, able to experiment with the language of consent without fear of repercussion. Indeed, for Simon, their Gainer kink transformed from one of abuse to care after finding supportive partners. From Joe, Bear, and Lily we can see the ways victimization and perpetration are being challenged and stretched, quite often in intentional spaces that hold our histories, fear, love, and collective accountability, at once.

From all collaborators we learn that violence and abuse is constantly being realized, internalized, and resisted in new contexts, paradigms, and through different conditions of possibility. We learn, overwhelmingly, that unfolding and emerging sexualities, genders, and relationship forms require an approach to (anti) violence that makes space for, and even encourages, this complexity.

Complicating discourses of violence within non/monogamous freedom and pleasure narratives, collaborator's insights are both heavy and promising to write about. Together, they are full with critiques of identity-based approaches to both (anti)violence and liberation, as well as contractual consent, egalitarian ideals, and state responses to relationship violence. The relationality within collaborators' place-based, structural, and affectually complex narratives interrupt the isolation of neoliberalism with the possibilities of alliance and collective accountability. This relationality overturns non/monogamies as a neat political opposite to monogamy that disavows its ties to the same systems of sexual, gendered, and racial normalization. Disrupting ideas of intimacy, and resistance, collaborators' PhotoVoice ultimately represents an attempt at trying to produce *something else*: collective, entangled, and historically informed practices of sharing out, and being together in difference.

In the following and final chapter, I outline collaborator's main contributions, interventions, and further ideas for creating change in their queer non/monogamous communities. Their PhotoVoice inquiries, as well as the processes by which those inquiries were arrived at and shared, are (counter)narratives that ultimately interrupt conventional gender-based heteronormative models of conceptualizing and addressing relationship violence.

Chapter Four:

PhotoVoice as Intervention: Reflections from Collaborators, Guests, and Organizers

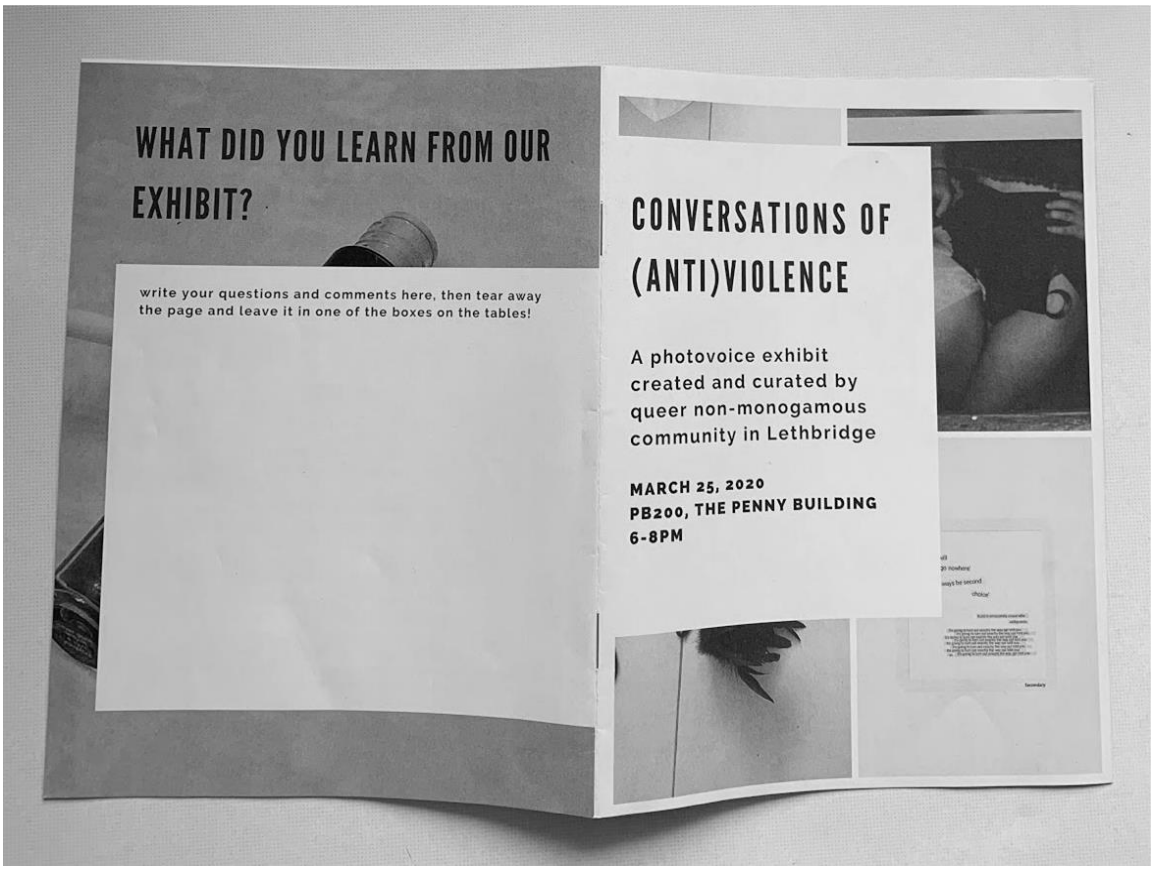


Fig 38: "What Did You Learn From Our Exhibit?"

In this final chapter I discuss the conversations and insights that were generated through the online exhibit collaborators' and I planned to showcase their PhotoVoice inquiries. The exhibit was geared towards opening up conversations about intimate violence in queer non/monogamous relationships between the invited guests of collaborators' respective communities. This discussion is grounded in the direct messages and Facebook comments I received from collaborators, guests, and community organizers during the exhibit period, prompted by the back cover of the Exhibit Zine (Figure 38). This feedback is important as the vulnerability of this project not only motivated ideas for future change, but

also present moments of solidarity, growth, and friction that changed how collaborators and guests internalized, processed, and sought support for the violence in their lives. In this way, their feedback demonstrates the ways in which collaborators' PhotoVoice holds space for a process that Leanne Betasamosake Simpson might articulate as a "flight inwards,"[193] where communities turn inwards to map futurity together as they overcome hardship, struggle, and resolution.

4.1 Collaborators

The initial conceptualizations of this research involving seven individuals from "queer non/monogamous communities" in "Southern Alberta" shifted over time to be closer and local, representing very small, overlapping and yet distinct fringes of queer non/monogamous relationships in Lethbridge. As I introduce in *2.3.1 Queer(y)ing Research Relationships*, some collaborators and I shared relationships through friendships, and my various roles in community education and grassroots governance, whereas other people were new to myself and the others involved. This combination of relationships bridged our circles through new forms of validation, as well as unexpected, and sometimes contrasting, perspectives. Some collaborators were excited to meet practitioners of non/monogamies outside of exclusively kink communities, and others, who consider their relationships more confined to people they grew up with, were surprised at both the existence and complexity of non/monogamous communities here outside of their own romantic relationships. At points, we brainstormed in response to the concerns from two collaborators who expressed that the anonymity of the project unnecessarily "stripped them of their context." Others found meaning in exploring queer non/monogomous community without the pressure of individual histories, and found inspiration through sharing outside of their close friendship circles. The ambivalence around

[193] Leanne Betasamosake Simpson. "Constellations of Coresistance." In *As We have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017, 214.

project anonymity encouraged collaborators and I to approach each other's stories gently and without assumption, often learning in the spaces between knowing each other and new introductions; between lived and imagined communities.

Quiet, Tate, Lily, and Joe provided feedback which reflects the conflicting nature of their involvement in the PhotoVoice, often leading to deep revelations, new commitments, changing relationships with people and their sexualities, and challenging mental health impacts. Quiet, who sent me a direct message two months after the exhibit commenced, reveals that "participating in this project has helped [them] begin to consider the ways power impacts [their] relationships and how increasing our awareness of power and having more open conversations can help us mitigate harm." Quiet tells me they have begun to be more critical of overly simplistic "jealousy/needs" narratives after confronting some of their boundaries through the PhotoVoice process:

> ...this conversation for me has been a starting point to naming and claiming my experiences of violence in non-monogamous relationships, and in doing so I have begun to question what my boundaries are, and what a fulfilling sexual, platonic, and other relationships look like for me. Beginning to have these conversations with myself and my partners has allowed me to begin to view my emotional responses outside of the overly simplistic but common narrative of jealous/needs that exists in polyamorous spaces and begin to inform my relationships with a more trauma-informed approach that allows for actual harm reduction in the ways we navigate polyamory together.

Closing their thoughts about mitigating harm, Quiet describes the PhotoVoice project as "very difficult and very rewarding," and "also healing," speaking to their shifting imagination of violence to incorporate their personal histories:

> I had never really considered the role (anti)violence played in my non-monogamous relationships and this project required me to confront a lot of traumatic experiences and shift the terms by which I imagined sexual assault and other violence. The project also encouraged me to do some introspection about how I felt about aspects of my relationship, and what establishing boundaries might look like...By considering my personal histories of violence I am working towards understanding the ways I respond to my partners and acknowledging the complex ways trauma impacts our relationship.

In closing, Quiet mentions how the naming and claiming of their violence has impacted their relationship with their sexuality: “In terms of identification, my involvement in this project has helped me to come to understand my sexuality as somewhere in the grey-ace spectrum, where I experience limited sexual attraction based on the level of comfort I feel with my partners.”

Coming to terms with emergent identities is also a process that was shared by Tate, who explains their participation in the research project: “It provided me an opportunity to really engage with the violence in my life. The PhotoVoice methodology created a space for me to be both creative and analytical and I learned a lot about myself. This project even led to a re-defining of my sexuality and the ending of a relationship I had come to learn was toxic.” Tate further reflects on how participation in this research elucidated the ways in which violence gets internalized:

> This project really helped me think about the ways that violence gets internalized by me, and you get so used to these things that you don’t even consider them a violence anymore...so this project made me really sit back and think about how did I come to be okay with this? Was this okay in the beginning? Is it still now? You’re kind of like “that was uncomfortable but it’s fine” or “maybe it’s uncomfortable because it’s new to me” and you kind of devalue your initial reaction, even though your initial reaction is usually how you actually feel about it.

However, they also tell me that the vulnerability they engaged with as part of this creative and analytical process had an impact on their mental health: “What was most challenging with the project was being so frank and vulnerable with trauma. Participating within it had a notable negative impact on my mental health. It was very important to me to participate however, as being part of queer research in regards to anti violence is so important to our community.” Tate’s comments about worthwhile yet challenging mental health affects reflects a community-oriented process that I have seen from all collaborators throughout, shifting to harm mitigation and reduction for future versions of themselves, as well as other queer community members.

Like Tate, Lily's feedback also speaks to the ways that trauma has "metastasized" and "settled in ways [she] did not expect," as she has used PhotoVoice to work through the violence she has experienced through non/monogamies in intentional ways. Careful not to blame non/monogamies as a relationship style, Lily expresses a sadness around having to participate in non/monogamies in new ways due to trauma, their shifting identity, and the solidarity gained through witnessing other collaborators stories:

> ...I'm not the same person I was at any other point in the project and that's okay. Growth is happening somewhere although I don't always see it. It's unfortunate, but healing can take many things before it gives any, and I have lived with a lot of the grief those traumas brought. I hope it will pass eventually of course, and the stories of the other participants bring me peace in that regard. That all wounds will heal in their own time, and there are ways to get there eventually.

To me, the differing timelines of collaborators' stories of violence seem to contribute to the peace Lily feels, despite the constant negotiation of ongoing trauma, signalling the benefits of being open to both past and present experiences of non/monogamous relationship violence in the research design.

Touching more in-depth about the community that the project provided, Lily explains the silencing effects of "lateral violence" in non/monogamous contexts:

> As cliché as it is, it has helped to feel less alone as someone who has experienced abuse in a queer non-monogamous context. There is a sense that people in non-monogamous or open relationships are informed and experienced enough to avoid non-consensual situations or abuse. This isn't true of course but people don't often talk about abuse and the myth is preserved. I think there is often a silencing effect in marginalized contexts. That speaking about lateral violence in non-monogamies damages the reputation of those relationships and confirms people's prejudices about that relationship style. In queer community we more often discuss past trauma like parental abuse which isn't the freshest thing in mind if you've experience lateral violence at the hands of a queer person you trusted.

Lily's comments resonate with Quiet's earlier critiques of having their requests for support silenced due to stereotypes of non/monogamous people as "sex and relationship gurus," as well as Bear's critiques of the effectiveness of egalitarian principles in contexts where social difference is felt.

Lily's consideration of "lateral violence" is also important in how she has come to (re)conceptualize, theorize, and understand violence in these contexts. Lateral violence is a grassroots concept coined by queer and Indigenous activist communities to refer to displays of violence against *peers* as opposed to perpetrators, as a way to conceptualize and navigate the complex, intimate, and structural violences that this project explores. As opposed to a predefined list of behaviours, lateral violence's potential lies in its ability, as a concept, to consider the intergenerational, community-based, and regenerative ways that violence works. Beyond this, it has also been used to describe the effects of abuse within rural, small, and close-knit communities, where the "pressure-cooker" of the smallness of community makes it almost impossible to avoid or escape each other. This is in stark contrast to other terms such as "domestic," "relationship," or "intimate partner," that work to contain relations of power to individual relationships, assume exclusionary and punitive consequences to violence, and subsequently further the agenda of a neoliberal, gender-based anti-violence movement. Lily explains the struggle for her queer communities to unify around the "painful presents" that this concept signals:

> I've found 'lateral violence' less unifying than the childhood and gender traumas we bond over in queer communities. We might come together over painful pasts but painful presents seem to be less a source of queer camaraderie. Being able to name someone who lives in your community and shares the same spaces as you and your friends is a far more troubling revelation than describing your far removed parents who live in another city. It can be ugly, or at least make you feel that way.

Lily's exploration of this concept towards the end of the research project points to an area of intervention as queer non/monogamous communities seek to find new language with which to more effectively navigate structural violence, networks of power relations at work in non/monogamous communities, as well as the monogamous assumptions in conventional gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence.

Lily provides one final and provocative comment about what she calls a "queer mythical journey" that is idealized and preserved, and how this pictures into conversations of violence in non/monogamous contexts:

> I find queerness comes with many promises but there are no guarantees to back them. Queerness would appear to be something you mature into, and there is trauma you may go through in the maturity process, but at the end you will emerge a realized queer person. This is a myth preserved in our collective imagination and by the colloquial use of "baby queers" to refer to recently out queer people, especially those who have not been in long-term monogamous homonormative relationships. A lot rides on this mythical journey we picture. The reality is that fully realizing yourself is not always possible under the conditions you find yourself in. Lateral violence hurts that process substantially, at least it hurt mine. Trauma burned the tips off my relationships and caused me to recede. Tenderness is much harder to hold. I've abandoned the idea of that queer journey and being "fully realized." We work with what we're given. Living a queer life in the shadow of those traumas is an unfortunate reality, but it is a possible one. One I'm working towards, at least.

Lily's reflections echo Muñoz, who outlines how being *in* the world requires a distrust of queer manifestations of the present.[194] Although queerness can present itself as "extraordinary," there is a lack of accountability to how the past *does* things, and a need for the present to "be known in relation to the alternative temporal and spatial maps provided by a perception of past and future affective worlds."[195] Describing a way of "doing in futurity," Muñoz, like Lily, is engaged in a critical methodology of hope, arguing against "straight time," where "the only futurity promised is that of reproductive majoritarian heterosexuality."[196]

Joe, the final collaborator to provide feedback on their experience with the research project, remarks on the internal and relational dialogue that was sparked, as well as the educational gaps and stigma their PhotoVoice intervened in as a group:

> I strongly believe that intentionally analyzing abuse, trauma, privilege, etc, and its role within any relationship is incredibly valuable. For me, finding examples of the

[194] Jose Muñoz. "Queerness as Horizon," 2009.
[195] Muñoz, 27.
[196] Muñoz, 22.

> way abuse or trauma has influenced the way I have navigated my relationships (pre/post- polyamory) was an important exercise. It forced a critical look inward at my behavior, reactions, aversions, and emotional maturity exhibited over the years...It sparked a quality internal dialogue and ushered important conversations between myself and both of my partners. Many of the participant anecdotes were very raw and helped to fill educational gaps in understanding surrounding navigating abuse within the polyamory and queer community. The public-facing conversation about polyamory played a role in education and breaking stigmas surrounding the topic.

Later, Joe shared that his research involvement ultimately prompted him to reveal his non/monogamy status with his biological family, which was met with confusion, curiosity, and love.

4.2 Guests

Guests, who ranged from friends, housemates, platonic and romantic partners, and prominent community figures like university instructors, were invited to view the exhibit through Facebook. It became clear that collaborators' strategy for the small circulation and targeted impact of their stories made a difference in the lives of those who engaged with them. For guests, this showed up in several significant ways, where they: felt *seen* and emotional; made connections between concepts that were otherwise unrelated to them until the exhibit; were encouraged to challenge and interrogate their feelings, beliefs, and experiences; and were able to provide validation, solidarity, and gratitude to research collaborators for their work.

Commenting directly on Jingle's "Glossed Over," one guest notes the powerful metaphorical value of Jingle's ex-girlfriend's lip-gloss, revisiting their assumptions about

polyamory, age, and autonomy:

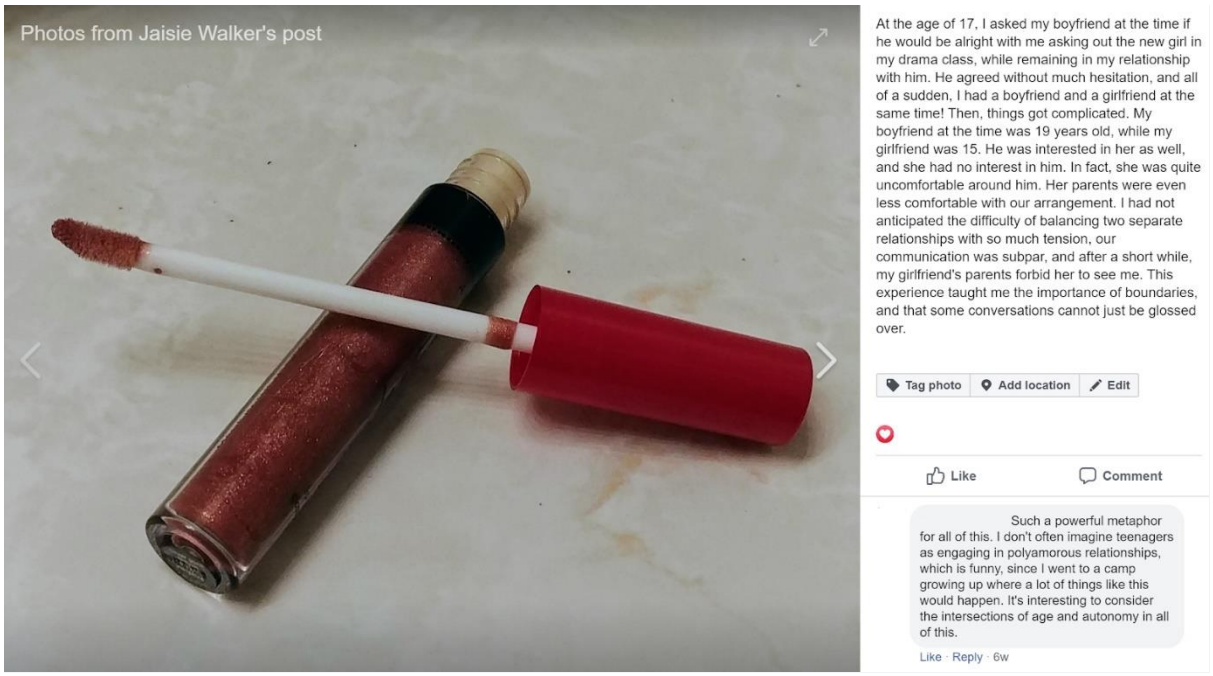


Fig 39: "Glossed Over" Guest Comment

The guest adds, "So many of these stories bring up such strong memories I haven't thought about in years. I feel like I should be writing down everything I'm feeling so that I can mull over it," illustrating the success of PhotoVoice to provoke memory, history, and past feelings in viewer's consideration of present-day anti-violence initiatives. In another response to Simon's photo "Subcutaneous," they wrote: "This is so challenging and important to read, as someone who has spent their entire life being shamed, abused, and objectified for being fat. I appreciate this honesty. It elicits a really visceral fear response in me, and I want to interrogate that more." I'm grateful for the vulnerability this guest mirrors, as well as the residual fear this allows them to realize, articulate, and navigate.

One guest's comment particularly struck me about a friend whose relationships they admit to idealizing, as they describe taking off "rose coloured glasses:"

> I was very struck by the photos and stories from the participant who invited me. As a young queer individual, newly out, and navigating non monogamies in my own relationships, I've faced many difficulties and challenges in navigating who I am. This individual was such a good role model to me, and showed me how one can live

> their life unapologetically and honestly. They are confident, advocate for themselves, and bold. Through my rose coloured glasses I imagined they moved through their relationships and partners with positivity and grace. What this helped me see is the reality of non monogamy and violence. Partner violence isn't selective, and no matter how confident, intelligent, and bold you are I realize that it is a very unfortunate and sad piece of many queer folx's experiences-- especially with the added complexities of being in non monogamous relationships.

Their introspection touches on their internalization of simplified positivity discourses, and connects with Lily's comments about queer myths and imagined trajectories, teasing out the complexities of power in these contexts beyond individual choice and intervention. This same guest expresses their anger following this realization, which was further amplified by the intersections of marginalization they learned through the exhibit:

> I was angry that people must move through partner violence, discrimination, and manipulation. Angry that queer and non monogamous individuals are disproportionately impacted by violence. I'm angry at the intersection of many of these individual's experiences. At the way income, self worth, sexuality, identity, history, and mental illness create a perfect storm to impact how an individual experiences violence from within themselves or from others.

Finally, they communicate how these angry feelings are also met with "feelings of hope, resiliency, and empowerment." Highlighting the benefits of the space generated through community-based research, they explain:

> These individuals chose to share vulnerable pieces of their past that were often so dark and challenging in the moment. To hear these beautiful strangers share pieces of their experiences, and how they are continuing to cope with their trauma and the emotional impact of surviving their own unique experiences with violence is so powerful and inspiring. Relationships are complex, violence is complex, but we can move through it together. When a space is created to be able to share and learn from the experiences of those around you, healing and rebuilding can begin.

To me, the multiplicity of this guest's response mirrors the emotional complexity of collaborators' creative direction, who as a group believed in showing the parts of their stories that are still unfolding, and being experimented with, re-defined, and re-imagined. Inspiring "togetherness," collaborators invited guests into the messiness of trying to, as Quiet says, "name and claim" the violence in their lives.

Picking up on the (un)speakability that is felt while engaging with the online PhotoVoice exhibit, another guest commented, “The *Conversations of (Anti)Violence* exhibit gave so much to think about, to the degree that it's actually quite challenging to comment on (so I can only imagine the intensity and vulnerability of the participants and researcher, to whom I am very grateful!).” Identifying themselves as someone who is often trying to make research more accessible to the frontline staff they work with, this guest went on to mention the “process and format of this work:”

> Seeing academic work so open and available, and so clearly holding space for community voices in a way that feels really authentic and honest was really impactful and incredible. It feels like it opens the conversation not just about the topic of (anti)violence and nonmonogamy, but also about how we relate to learning as community members and private individuals, and in our personal relationships. That part was fascinating to me - I know there are many works in community research, but this one felt quite liberating and bridging. It was an invitation to new ideas about shared learning that I expect I'll bring with me into the future in my own work in and as community.

Speaking to the content of the exhibit itself, this same guest articulates their feelings of solidarity and feeling *seen* through collaborators’ work:

> It's one of those topics that seems like many of us or many folks in general must be struggling with, with that "Is it just me?" question. But this content is just out in the open, in a really tender way. It's like I can feel new breath and space in the community because folks have shared these stories. The biggest themes that I was impacted by was the overarching thread of how we communicate with ourselves and others - that there's this clear gap in even just knowing what words to use to describe our experiences so we can process them both internally and with others, or communicate our boundaries, or give or receive care. That sense of struggling to even just say the things we need was really evident, and something I could feel really deeply.

Their identification of this *gap* in both speaking our needs and describing our experiences amplifies one of Quiet’s main challenges described in “Bed”, and I sense that this is an important point of intervention for all non/monogamous folks to work on approaches to consent that reflect the complexity of these experiences. Furthermore, I was moved by this guest’s question “Is it just me?” which admittedly brought me back to one of my more

vulnerable impulses for initiating this research. In closing, this guest outlines the tools and questions that they will take with them:

> I think, as good research and community work does - it left me with tools (new words, ideas, communication strategies, empathy, understanding, knowledge) and with more questions. What are the ways that I relate to non-monogamy through my relationships, friendships, roommate-ships, and more? How can I practice antiviolence in my relationships, and with myself? It leaves a lot to think about, and provides good company for the journey.

4.3 Community Organizers

Collaborators' hoped queer community leader's participation with the PhotoVoice would give them an innovative tool with which to explore and improve the programs over which they exert the most influence. The success of this participation is demonstrated through a comment offered by the current President of the Board of Directors of OUTreach Southern Alberta Society, who found it impactful that there was local research about relationships and communities often overlooked in rural programming. Remarking on the "incredible nuance" of queer non/monogamous relationships in our "small rural city" they say:

> Much like our city, you could easily overlook the impact and potential of these individuals and the experiences they've had. However, also like Lethbridge itself, there is a deeply unique and resonant representation of the challenges we face that ultimately, can only lead to growth. This project opens conversations within our community of rethinking and redefining violence, not only in interpersonal relationships but on a societal level, establishing boundaries from an informed and intersectional perspective, and what we represent as 'acceptable/passable' queerness. It has inspired us at OUTreach to consider how we can better support this community.

Rethinking and redefining violence is a resounding message for this guest, who seems moved by the commitment of collaborators to see their experiences through structural and intersectional lenses. For OUTreach, who are responsible for annual trans peer support groups, community gender and sexuality education, as well as high volumes of resource

referrals, these conversations could have an impact on the availability of intentional space offered to continue working through the complexities of violence for queer non/monogamous communties.

The owner and director of Didi's Playhaus/Theatre Outré, a local queer event venue and performance group, also commented on the hopefulness that this exhibit inspired. In particular, they noted the combined approach of challenging (mono)heternormative ideals while simultaneously acknowledging the complexities of violence in countercultural spaces:

> As a queer man living in Southern Alberta I found the PhotoVoice Exhibit on Non-Monogamies and (Anti)violence thoughtful and evocative. I feel great hope, in observing this exhibit, that restrictive ideals about monogamy and heteronormative notions of coupling are being re-examined by younger folx in the queer community who wish to explore alternative forms of romantic and sexual relationships in thoughtful and responsible ways by investigating how violence in all its forms can be studied and curtailed. As a leader of a queer space in Lethbridge I am thrilled to see this investigation of counter cultures undertaken in our community in such an artistic, thorough and compelling way.

This guest brings up their organization's commitments to creating a "culture of sex-positivity, body-positivity and consent," through ongoing consent campaigns. Suggesting the impact of the exhibit on these campaigns, as well as gesturing to the nuance that collaborators like Quiet provide in their inquiries into social difference and belonging in queer venues, they conclude by saying: "projects like this exhibition help shed light on to show there is more work to do and more avenues to explore to ensure the emotional, mental and physical safety of those who do not ascribe to prescribed ideals of gender and sexual expectations including those who participate in non-monogamy."

4.4 Concluding Reflections

I am viscerally and painstakingly reminded that there is no such thing as *disinterested* research, and it is difficult to communicate how hard it is to responsibly include my voice in this project. I began this research wanting *so* much- answers, distraction, and justice- and was met with an admittedly vulnerable mix of belonging and invalidation, often around my own experiences of violence, abuse, abandonment, and community. This research is at times necessarily and excitingly contradictory, having stretched me beyond my intuitions and original inclinations, and, as part of an emergent discourse, unable to resolve both the confusion and confidence it provokes. My own words spoke to me from an article Serena Visser, Suzanne Lenon and I recently published, where, speaking to intimate research as a radical act, I reflect:

> every time I get the urge to remain more objective and distant and not let things influence my research, I have to make a conscious effort to reject this, because I'm afraid my connections to my research will somehow impede it, and so instead I try to ask how I can mobilize that feeling methodologically. I wrote down, "How can I make intimate research a radical act? How can I make research an act of self-care for myself and others involved in the research, to not deny myself the connections and consequences that it will inevitably bring?" This is fear, and also possibility."[197]

These radical acts are indeed role-modelled by collaborators who provide pathways and interventions for themselves, their networked relationships, and community leaders.

This research project notably challenged how violence is lived, represented, and (re)defined in the context of queer non/monogamous communities in Lethbridge, Alberta. Drawing on geospatial, gendered, classed, affectual, institutional, structural, and lateral conceptualizations, collaborators' PhotoVoice troubles our definitions of violence, and gives permission for us to engage with our experiences in ways that honour the fullness of their complexity. In particular, collaborators called into question the dichotomous language of

[197] Serena Visser, Jaisie Walker, and Suzanne Lenon, "Notes in the Margins: A Conversation about Minnie Bruce Pratt's "Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart," *Feminist Formations* 32, no. 1 (2020): 227-237. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.uleth.ca/10.1353/ff.2020.0019.

victimization and perpetration, identity-based abuse tactics, contractual models of consent, and both hierarchical and egalitarian ideals, creating entry points for people to re-envision the reliance of their communities on conventional gender-based heteronormative models of relationship violence.

I am hopeful that collaborators' PhotoVoice projects shift some of the weight, shame, and stigma that accompanies experiencing violence in contexts of attempts at freedom and liberation. Their stories turn the attention of our queer identities and practices to our relationships with state, structural, and institutional apparatuses, and make visible some of our hardest and most unseen moments, tackling this subject with kindness, justice, and compassion. Moreover, their intimate arts-based biographies offer new understandings of 'doing' relationships against the backdrop of heteronormative constraints of mainstream coupledom, and make significant contributions to thinking about how to engage in arts-based research, online, in ethical ways, *and* during a major unprecedented pandemic.

Their collaboration and participation set the stage for interactions in which people representing disparate ages, incomes, experience, and social power no longer saw one another as inaccessible and lacking common ground. I anticipate that one of the most powerful outcomes of this research will continue to emerge in the long-term relationships built among collaborators who, having shared a memorable community assessment experience, newly appreciate and draw upon one another's expertise for future efforts to address anti-violence initiatives, and both queer and non/monogamous organizing.

References

Ahmed, Sara. *The Cultural Politics of Emotion*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

— — —. *The Promise of Happiness*. Durham [NC]: Duke University Press, 2010.

— — —. *Queer Phenomenology: Orientations, Objects, Others*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2006.

Alexander, Jacqui. *Pedagogies of Crossing: Meditations on Feminism, Sexual Politics, Memory, and the Sacred*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2005.

Allen, Louisa. "'Picture This': Using Photo-Methods in Research on Sexualities and Schooling." *Qualitative Research* 11, no. 5 (October 2011): 487–504. https://doi.org/10.1177/1468794111413224.

— — —. "Picturing Queer at School." *Journal of LGBT Youth* 12, no. 4 (2015): 367-384. https://doi.org/10.1080/19361653.2015.1077766.

Anzaldúa, Gloria. "To(o) Queer the Writer: Loca, Escritoria y Chicana." In *Inversions: Writings by Queer Dykes and Lesbians*, edited by Betsy Warland, 249-250. Vancouver: Press Gang Publishers, 1991.

Bain, Alison L., William Payne, and Jaclyn Isen. "Rendering a Neighbourhood Queer." *Social & Cultural Geography* 16, no. 4 (2015): 424-443. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2014.991750.

Bambara, Toni Cade. *The Black Woman: An Anthology*, Washington Square Press, 2005 [1970].

Baker, Kelly. "Out Back Home: An Exploration of LGBT Identities and Community in Rural Nova Scotia, Canada." In *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Studies*, edited by Mary L. Gray and Colin R. Johnson, 25-48. New York & London: New York University Press, 2016.

Barker, Meg, and Darren Langdridge. "Whatever Happened to Non-Monogamies? Critical Reflections on Recent Research and Theory." *Sexualities* 13, no. 6 (December 2010): 748–72. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460710384645.

Barker, Meg, Jamie Heckert, and Eleanor Wilkinson. "Polyamorous Intimacies: From One Love to Many Loves and Back Again." In *Mapping Intimacies: Relations, Exchanges, Affects*, edited by Tam Sanger and Yvette Taylor, 190-208. London: Palgrave Macmillan, 2013.

Beal, Frances. *Double Jeopardy: To Be Black and Female*, Radical Education Project, 1969.

Benson, Krista L. “Tensions of Subjectivity: The Instability of Queer Polyamorous Identity and Community.” *Sexualities* 20, no.1-2 (2017): 24-30. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716642154.

Bergstrand, Curtis R. and Jennifer Blevins Sinski. *Swinging in America; Love, Sex, and Marriage in the 21st Century.* Portland: Praeger, 2010.

Bilge, Sirma. “Intersectionality Undone: Saving Intersectionality from Feminist Intersectionality Studies.” *Du Bois Review: Social Science Research on Race* 10, no. 2 (2013): 405–24. https://doi.org/10.1017/s1742058x13000283.

— — —. “Theoretical Coalitions and Multi-Issue Activism: 'Our Struggles Will Be Intersectional or They Will Be Bullshit!”” In *Decolonizing Sexualities: Transnational Perspectives, Critical Interventions*, edited by Sandeep Bakshi, Suhraiya Jivraj, and Silvia Posocco, 108–22. Oxford: Counterpress, 2016.

Brewster, Melanie Elyse, Blake Soderstrom, Jessica Esposito, Andrew Breslow, Jacob Sawyer, Elizabeth Geiger, Negar Morshedian, et al. “A Content Analysis of Scholarship on Consensual Nonmonogamies: Methodological Roadmaps, Current Themes, and Directions for Future Research.” *Couple and Family Psychology: Research and Practice* 6, no. 1 (2017): 32-47. https://doi.org/10.1037/cfp0000074.

Browne, Kath and Gavin Brown. *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*. New York: Routledge, 2016.

Browne, Kath and Catherine J. Nash. *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theories and Social Science Research*. Farnham, UK: Ashgate, 2010.

Brown, Nicole. “Holding Tensions of Victimization and Perpetration: Partner Abuse in Trans Communities.” In *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives*, edited by Janice L. Ristock. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Brown, Wendy. *States of Injury: Power and Freedom in Late Modernity*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press, 1995.

Bumiller, Kristin. *In an Abusive State: How Neoliberalism Appropriated the Feminist Movement Against Sexual Violence*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2008.

Butler, Judith. “Against Proper Objects.” *Differences: A Journal of Feminist Cultural Studies* 6, no. 2 (1994): 1-26.

Canfield, Elizabeth. “Homonormativity and the Violence of the Geographic Solution.” In *Queering Paradigms IV: South-North Dialogues on Queer Epistemologies, Embodiments and Activisms*, edited by Elizabeth Sara Lewis, Rodrigo Borba, Branca Falabella Fabricio, and Diana De Souza Pinto. Bern: Peter Lang, 2014.

Carter, Sarah. *The Importance of Being Monogamous: Marriage and Nation Building in Western Canada to 1915*. Edmonton: University of Alberta Press, 2008.

Chambers-Letson, Joshua. *After the Party: A Manifesto for Queer of Color Life*. New York: New York University Press, 2018.

Chen, Ching-In, Jai Dulani, and Leah Lakshmi Piepzna-Samarasinha, eds. *The Revolution Starts at Home: Confronting Intimate Violence Within Activist Communities*. Chico, CA: AK Press, 2016.

Combahee River Collective. "A Black Feminist Statement." *WSQ: Women's Studies Quarterly* 42, no.3-4 (2014[1978]): 271-280.

Coomaraswamy, Radhika, and Nimanthi Perera-Rajasingham, eds. *Constellations of Violence: Feminist interventions in South Asia*. New Delhi: Women Unlimited, 2008.

Crawford, Lucas. "A Good Ol' Country Time: Does Queer Rural Temporality Exist?" *Sexualities* 20, no. 8 (December 2017): 904–20. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716674930.

Crenshaw, Kimberle. "Mapping the Margins: Intersectionality, Identity Politics, and Violence Against Women of Color." *Stanford Law Review* 43, no. 6 (1991): 1241-1299. https://doi.org/10.2307/1229039.

Deri, Jillian. *Love's Refraction: Jealousy and Compersion in Queer Women's Polyamorous Relationships*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2015.

Duggan, Lisa. "The New Homonormativity: The Sexual Politics of Neoliberalism." In *Materializing Democracy: Toward a Revitalized Cultural Politics*, edited by Russ Castronovo and Dana Nelson, 175–94. Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2002.

Donovan, Catherine and Rebecca Barnes. "Domestic Violence and Abuse in Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual and/or Transgender (LGB and/or T) Relationships." *Sexualities* 22, no. 5–6 (September 2019): 741–50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716681491.

Donovan, Catherine, and Marianne Hester. "Exploring Emotion Work in Domestically Abusive Relationships." In *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives*, edited by Janice Ristock, 81-101. New York: Routledge, 2011.

"Downtown Lethbridge Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP)." Downtown Lethbridge Area Redevelopment Plan (DARP). Accessed May 18, 2020. https://www.lethbridge.ca/Doing-Business/Planning-Development/Planning/Pages/DARP.aspx.

"Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy." Downtown Clean and Safe Strategy. Accessed May 18, 2020. https://www.lethbridge.ca/living-here/Downtown/Pages/Downtown-Clean-Safe-Strategy.aspx.

Driskill, Qwo-Li. "Doubleweaving Two-Spirit Critiques: Building Alliances between Native Studies and Queer Studies." In *Asegi Stories: Cherokee Queer and Two-Spirit Memory*, 21-38. Tucson: University of Arizona Press, 2016.

Dryden, OmiSoore H., and Suzanne Lenon. *Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalisms and the Politics of Belonging*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2015.

Easton, Donnie, and Janet Hardy. *The Ethical Slut: A Guide to Infinite Sexual Possibilities*. Emeryville, CA: Greenery Press, 1997.

Emens, Elizabeth F. "Monogamy's Law: Compulsory Monogamy and Polyamorous Existence." *New York University Review of Law & Social Change* 29, no. 2 (2004): 277.

Eng, David L. *The Feeling of Kinship: Queer Liberalism and the Racialization of Intimacy*. Durham: Duke University Press, 2010.

Ferrer, Jorge N. "Mononormativity, Polypride, and the "Mono–Poly Wars."" *Sexuality & Culture* 22, no. 3 (September 2018): 817-36. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-017-9494-y.

Fields, Jessica. "Feminist Ethnography: Critique, Conflict, and Ambivalent Observance." *Journal of Contemporary Ethnography* 42, no. 4 (August 2013): https://doi.org/10.1177/0891241613483567.

Fields, Jessica. "The Racialized Erotics of Participatory Research: A Queer Feminist Understanding." *Women's Studies Quarterly* 44, no. 3-4 (2016): 31-50. https://doi.org/10.1353/wsq.2016.0034.

Fields, Jessica, Martha Copp, and Sherryl Kleinman. "Symbolic Interactionism, Inequality, and Emotions." In *Handbook of the Sociology of Emotions,* edited by Jan E. Stets, Jonathan H. Turner, and Jonathan H. Turner. 155-178. Boston, MA: Springer US, 2006.

Fileborn, Bianca. "Accounting for Space, Place and Identity: GLBTIQ Young Adults' Experiences and Understandings of Unwanted Sexual Attention in Clubs and Pubs." *Critical Criminology* 22, no. 1 (2014): 81-97. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10612-013-9221-4.

Goldie, Terry. *In a Queer Country: Gay and Lesbian Studies in the Canadian Context.* Vancouver: Arsenal Pulp Press, 2001.

Gordon, Avery F. *Ghostly Matters: Haunting and the Sociological Imagination.* N-New, Second ed. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2008. doi:10.5749/j.ctttt4hp.

Gotell, Lise. "Third-wave Anti-rape Activism on Neoliberal Terrain: The Garneau Sisterhood." In *Sexual Assault in Canada: Law, Legal Practice and Women's Activism,* edited by Elizabeth A. Sheehy. Ottawa: University of Ottawa Press, 2012.

Hartal, Gilly. "Fragile Subjectivities: Constructing Queer Safe Spaces." *Social & Cultural Geography* 19, no. 8: 1-20. https://doi.org/10.1080/14649365.2017.1335877.

Haritaworn, Jin. "Shifting Positionalities: Empirical Reflections on a Queer/Trans of Colour Methodology." *Sociological Research Online* 13, no. 1 (2008): 1-12. https://doi.org/10.5153/sro.1631.

Haritaworn, Jin, Chin-Ju Lin, and Christian Klesse. "Poly/logue: A Critical Introduction to Polyamory." *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 515-529. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706069963.

Hill Collins, Patricia and Sirma Bilge. *Intersectionality*. Cambridge: Polity Press, 2016.

Hochschild, Arlie Russell. *The Managed Heart: Commercialization of Human Feeding*. Berkeley: University of California Press, 2012.

Holmes, Cindy. "Troubling Normalcy: Examining Healthy Relationships Discourses in Lesbian Domestic Violence Prevention." In *Intimate Partner Violence in LGBTQ Lives*, edited by Janice Ristock. New York: Routledge, 2011.

Holtby, Alix, Kate Klein, Katie Cook, and Robb Travers. "To Be Seen or Not to Be Seen: Photovoice, Queer and Trans Youth, and the Dilemma of Representation." *Action Research* 13, no. 4 (December 2015): 317–35. https://doi.org/10.1177/1476750314566414.

Ibrahim, Dyna. "Police-Reported Violence among Same-Sex Intimate Partners in Canada, 2009 to 2017." Statistics Canada. March 20, 2019. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2019001/article/00005-eng.htm.

Janoviček, Nancy. *No Place to Go: Local Histories of the Battered Women's Shelter Movement*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2007.

Johnson, Colin R., Brian J. Gilley, and Mary L. Gray. "Introduction." In *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Studies*, edited by Mary L. Gray and Colin R. Johnson, 25-48. New York & London: New York University Press, 2016.

Kean, Jessica Joan. "Relationship Structure, Relationship Texture: Case Studies in Non/Monogamies Research." *Cultural Studies Review* 23, no. 1 (2017), 19-35. https://doi.org/10.5130/csr.v23i1.4955.

Klesse, Christian. "Bisexuality, Slippery Slopes, and Multipartner Marriage." *Journal of Bisexuality* 18, no. 1 (2018): 35-53. https://doi.org/10.1080/15299716.2017.1373264.

— — —. "Expert Interview: The Trials and Tribulations of Being a 'Slut'-Ethical, Psychological, and Political Thoughts on Polyamory." *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 643-50. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706070006.

— — —. "'How to be a Happy Homosexual?!' Non-Monogamy and Governmentality in Relationship Manuals for Gay Men in the 1980s and 1990s." *The Sociological Review* 55, no. 3 (2007): 571-591. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-954x.2007.00722.x.

— — —. "Polyamory and its 'Others': Contesting the Terms of Non-Monogamy." *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 565-583. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706069986.

— — —. "Poly Economics—Capitalism, Class, and Polyamory." *International Journal of Politics, Culture, and Society* 27, no. 2 (2014): 203-220. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10767-013-9157-4.

— — —. “Polyamory: Intimate Practice, Identity or Sexual Orientation?” *Sexualities* 17, no. 1-2 (2014): 81-99. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460713511096.

Korinek, Valerie Joyce. *Prairie Fairies: A History of Queer Communities and People in Western Canada, 1930-1985*. Toronto: University of Toronto Press, 2018.

Law, John. *After Method: Mess in Social Science Research*. New York: Routledge, 2004.

“Lethbridge Police Watch Program.” Lethbridge Police Watch Program. Accessed May 18, 2020. https://www.lethbridgepolice.ca/news/lps-working-get-watch-patrollers-ground.

Levine, Ethan Czuy, Debby Herbenick, Omar Martinez, Tsung-Chieh Fu, and Brian Dodge. “Open Relationships, Nonconsensual Nonmonogamy, and Monogamy among U.S. Adults: Findings from the 2012 National Survey of Sexual Health and Behavior.” *Archives of Sexual Behavior* 47, no. 5 (2018): 1439-1450. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10508-018-1178-7.

MacDonald, Michael. “3 Adults in Polyamorous Relationship Declared Legal Parents by N.L. Court.” *The Canadian Press*, June 14, 2018. https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/newfoundland-labrador/polyamourous-relationship-three-parents-1.4706560.

Marshall, David J., Lynn A. Staeheli, Dima Smaira, and Konstantin Kastrissianakis. “Narrating Palimpsestic Spaces.” *Environment and Planning A: Economy and Space* 49, no. 5 (May 2017): 1163–80. https://doi.org/10.1177/0308518x17690531.

Malinen, KelleyAnne, ed. *Dis/Consent: Perspectives on Sexual Consent and Sexual Violence.* Winnipeg: Fernwood Publishing, 2019.

Michaels, Mark A., and Patricia Johnson. *Designer Relationships: A Guide to Happy Monogamy, Positive Polyamory, and Optimistic Open Relationships*. Jersey City, NJ: Cleis Press, 2015.

Morgensen, Scott Lauria. *Spaces between Us: Queer Settler Colonialism and Indigenous Decolonization*. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2011.

Morrigan, Clementine. *Love without Emergency: I Want This but I Feel like I’m Going to Die / Writings on Attachment, and Polyamory*. Montreal, Québec: Clementine Morrigan, 2019.

Moss, Alison Rose. “Alternative Families, Alternative Lives: Married Women Doing Bisexuality.” *Journal of GLBT Family Studies* 8, no. 5 (2012): 405-427. https://doi.org/10.1080/1550428x.2012.729946.

Myrdahl, Tiffany Muller. “Ordinary (Small) Cities and LGBQ Lives.” *ACME: An International E-Journal for Critical Geographies* 12, no. 2 (2013): 279-304. https://acme-journal.org/index.php/acme/article/view/963.

— — —. “Theatre Outré and Lessons from a Welcoming and Inclusive Community.” In *Toward Equality and Inclusion in Canadian Cities: Lessons from Critical Praxis-*

Oriented Research, edited by Fran Klodawsky, Janet Siltanen, and Caroline Andrew, 256–80. McGill-Queen's University Press, 2017.

— — —. "Visibility on Their Own Terms? LGBTQ Lives in Small Canadian Cities." In *The Routledge Research Companion to Geographies of Sex and Sexualities*, edited by Gavin Brown and Kath Browne. Abingdon: Routledge, 2016.

Muñoz, José Esteban. "Queerness as Horizon: Utopian Hermeneutics in the Face of Gay Pragmatism." In *Cruising Utopia: The Then and There of Queer Futurity*, 19-32. New York: New York University Press, 2009.

Native Land. "Territory Acknowledgement." Native Land, April 10, 2020. https://native-land.ca/territory-acknowledgement/.

Noel, Melita J. "Progressive Polyamory: Considering Issues of Diversity." *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 602-620.

Overall, Christine. "Monogamy, Nonmonogamy, and Identity." *Hypatia* 13, no. 4 (1998): 1-17. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.1998.tb01382.x.

Pain, Rachel and Lynn Staeheli. "Introduction: Intimacy-Geopolitics and Violence." *Area* 46, no. 4 (2014): 345. https://doi.org/10.1111/area.12138.

Patterson, Jennifer. *Queering Sexual Violence*. Riverdale Avenue Books, 2016.

Patterson, Kevin A. *Love's Not Color Blind: Race and Representation in Polyamorous and Other Alternative Communities*. Portland, OR: Thorntree Press, 2018.

Pérez, Pablo Navarro. "Beyond Inclusion: Non-Monogamies and the Borders of Citizenship." *Sexuality and Culture* 21, no. 2 (2017): 441-458. https://doi.org/10.1007/s12119-016-9398-2.

Petrella, Serena. "Ethical Sluts and Closet Polyamorists: Dissident Eroticism, Abject Subjects and the Normative Cycle in Self-Help Books on Free Love." In *Sexual Politics of Desire and Belonging*, edited by Nick Rumens and Alejandro Cervantes-Carson, Amsterdam: Radopi, 2007.

Piedalue, Amy. "Beyond 'Culture' as an Explanation for Intimate Violence: The Politics and Possibilities of Plural Resistance." *Gender, Place & Culture* 24, no. 4 (2017): 563-574. https://doi.org/10.1080/0966369x.2016.1219323.

— — —. "Understanding Violence in Place: Travelling Knowledge Paradigms and Measuring Domestic Violence in India." *Indian Journal of Gender Studies* 22, no. 1 (2015): 63-91. https://doi.org/10.1177/0971521514556947.

Pieper, Marianne, and Robin Bauer. "Polyamory and Mono-normativity: Results of an Empirical Study of Nonmonogamous Patterns of Intimacy." MS, Research Center for Feminist, Gender, and Queer Studies, University of Hamburg, Hamburg, 2005.

Posocco, Silvia. "(Decolonizing) The Ear of the Other: Subjectivity, Ethics and Politics in Question." In *Decolonizing Sexualities: Transnational Perspectives, Critical*

Interventions, edited by Sandeep Bakshi, Suhraiya Jivraj, and Silvia Posocco. Oxford: Counterpress, 2016.

Pratt, Minnie Bruce. "Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart." In *Yours in Struggle: Three Feminist Perspectives on Anti-Semitism and Racism*, edited by Ellen Bulkin, Minnie Bruce Pratt and Barbara Smith, 27-77. New York: Long Haul Press, 1984.

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

Rambukkana, Nathan. *Fraught Intimacies: Non/monogamy in the Public Sphere*. Vancouver: UBC Press, 2016.

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

Rice, Carla, Susan D. Dion, Hannah Fowlie, and Ingrid Mündel. "Re/turning the Gaze: Unsettling Settler Logics through Multimedia Storytelling." *Feminist Media Studies* (2020): 1-19. https://doi.org/10.1080/14680777.2019.1707256.

Rich, Adrienne. "Compulsory Heterosexuality and Lesbian Existence." *Signs* 5, no. 4 (1980): 631-660.

— — —. "Notes Towards a Politics of Location." In *Feminist Postcolonial Reader*, edited by Reina Lewis and Sara Mills, 29-42. New York & London: Routledge, 2003.

Richie, Beth. *Arrested Justice: Black Women, Violence, and America's Prison Nation*. New York: New York University Press, 2012.

Riordan, Michael. *Out Our Way: Gay and Lesbian Life in the Country*. Toronto: Between The Lines, 2000.

Ristock, Janice, Art Zoccole, Lisa Passante, and Jonathon Potskin. "Impacts of Colonization on Indigenous Two-Spirit/LGBTQ Canadians' Experiences of Migration, Mobility and Relationship Violence." *Sexualities* 22, no. 5–6 (September 2019): 767–84. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460716681474.

Rolbiecki, Abigail, Kim Anderson, Michelle Teti, and David L. Albright. ""Waiting for the Cold to End": Using Photovoice as a Narrative Intervention for Survivors of Sexual Assault." *Traumatology* 22, no. 4 (2016): 242-248. https://doi.org/10.1037/trm0000087.

Rosenberg, Gabriel N. "A Classroom in the Barnyard: Reproducing Heterosexuality in Inter-War American in Queering 4-H." In *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Studies*, edited by Mary L. Gray and Colin R. Johnson, 25-48. New York & London: New York University Press, 2016.

Roulston, Tom. "Lethbridge Discovery of Two Live Mortar Rounds." Global News, March 3, 2020. https://globalnews.ca/news/6620694/lethbridge-police-mortar-rounds/?fbclid=IwAR18-SfW4-hNMNBP4aChbwG8gDT-adouOIL_MxTK_3yMzDuab9bZ9xquOK0.

Rubin, Gayle. "Thinking Sex." *Square Peg* no. 10 (1985): 32.

Schippers, Mimi. *Beyond Monogamy: Polyamory and the Future of Polyqueer Sexualities*. New York: New York University Press, 2016.

Schweighofer, Katherine. “Rethinking the Closet: Queer Life in Rural Geographies.” In *Queering the Countryside: New Frontiers in Rural Queer Studies,* edited by Mary L. Gray, Colin R. Johnson, and Brian J. Gilley, 223-243. New York: New York University Press, 2016.

Scott, Joan W. “The Evidence of Experience.” *Critical Inquiry* 17, no. 4 (1991): 773-97. Accessed April 7, 2017. http://www.jstor.org/stable/1343743.

Sheff, Elisabeth. "Poly-Hegemonic Masculinities." *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (2006): 621-642. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706070004.

Sheff, Elisabeth and Corie Hammers. “The Privilege of Perversities: Race, Class and Education among Polyamorists and Kinksters.” *Psychology & Sexuality* 2, no. 3 (2011): 198-223. https://doi.org/10.1080/19419899.2010.537674.

Simpson, Laura. “Violent Victimization of Lesbians, Gays and Bisexuals in Canada, 2014.” Statistics Canada. May 31, 2018. https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/n1/pub/85-002-x/2018001/article/54923-eng.htm.

Simpson, Leanne Betasamosake. “Constellations of Coresistance.” In *As We Have Always Done: Indigenous Freedom through Radical Resistance,* 211-231. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 2017.

Smith, Carrol Ann Marschner. “Women Who Abuse their Female Intimate Partners: A Qualitative Study.” ProQuest Dissertations Publishing, 2006.

Stone, Livia K. “Suffering Bodies and Scenes of Confrontation: The Art and Politics of Representing Structural Violence.” *Visual Anthropology Review* 31, no. 2 (2015): 177-189. https://doi.org/10.1111/var.12080.

Kim TallBear, “An Indigenous Reflection on Working beyond the Human/Not Human,” *GLQ: A Journal of Lesbian and Gay Studies,* 21, no. 2 (2015): 230-235.

TallBear, Kim. “Yes, Your Pleasure! Yes, Self-Love! And Don't Forget, Settler Sex Is a Structure*.” *The Critical Polyamorist*. April 22, 2018. http://www.criticalpolyamorist.com/homeblog/yes-your-pleasure-yes-self-love-and-dont-forget-settler-sex-is-a-structure.

Taormino, Tristan. *Opening Up: A Guide to Creating and Sustaining Open Relationships*. San Fransisco: Cleis Press, 2008.

Tuck, Eve. “Suspending Damage: A Letter to Communities.” *Harvard Educational Review* 79, no. 3 (2009): 409-428. https://doi.org/10.17763/haer.79.3.n0016675661t3n15.

Visser, Serena, Jaisie Walker, and Suzanne Lenon. “Notes in the Margins: A Conversation about Minnie Bruce Pratt’s “Identity: Skin, Blood, Heart”.” Feminist Formations 32, no. 1 (2020): 227-237. http://dx.doi.org.ezproxy.uleth.ca/10.1353/ff.2020.0019.

Vowel, Chelsea. “Beyond Territorial Acknowledgements.” *âpihtawikosisân: law, language, culture*. September 23, 2016. https://apihtawikosisan.com/2016/09/beyond-territorial-acknowledgments/#_ftnref2.

Wahab, Amar. “Unveiling Fetishnationalism: Bidding for Citizenship in Queer Times.” In *Disrupting Queer Inclusion: Canadian Homonationalisms and the Politics of Belonging*, edited by OmiSoore H. Dryden and Suzanne Lenon, 35–48. UBC Press, 2015.

Wang, Caroline C. “Photovoice: A Participatory Action Research Strategy Applied to Women's Health.” *Journal of Women's Health* 8, no. 2 (1999): 185-192. https://doi.org/10.1089/jwh.1999.8.185.

Wilkinson, Elizabeth. “What's Queer about Non-Monogamy Now?” In *Understanding Non-monogamies,* edited by M. Barker and D. Langdridge, New York: Routledge, 2010.

Willey, Angela. “‘Christian Nations,’ ‘Polygamic Races’ and Women’s Rights: Toward a Genealogy of Non/Monogamy and Whiteness.” *Sexualities* 9, no. 5 (December 1, 2006): 530-546. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460706069964.

Willis, Abbey S. ““One among Many”? Relational Panopticism and Negotiating Non-Monogamies.” *Sexualities* 22, no. 4 (2019): 507-531. https://doi.org/10.1177/1363460718756569.

Winnubst, Shannon. “Free to Be Queer: Queer to Be Free.” In *Queering Freedom,* 111-149. Bloomington & Indianapolis: Indiana University Press, 2006.

Yuen, Jenny. *Polyamorous: Living and Loving More*. Toronto: Dundurn Press, 2018.

Appendix A: Consent Form

LETTER OF CONSENT
Study Title: Unsettling Lateral Violence:
Genealogies of Queer Non/Monogamies in Southern Alberta

You are being invited to participate in a research study on LGBTQA2S+ people's experiences of violence in non/monogamous relationships in Southern Alberta. The information collected from this study will be used as part of the requirements for a Masters of Arts in Women and Gender Studies at the University of Lethbridge. Any questions you have about this research may be addressed to Jaisie Walker (Email: queernonmonogamyresearch@gmail.com).

This consent form is only part of the process of informed consent. It should give you the basic idea of what the research is about and what your participation will involve. Please take time to read this carefully and to ask any questions that you may have. You will receive a copy of this form to keep for your own reference.

The Research

The purpose of this research study is to learn about your experience of LGBTQA2S+ violence in non/monogamous relationships, and change the conversation around how to address these experiences. This research involves 4 parts: this brief meeting, a photography assignment, an interview about your photographs, and an art exhibit.

Photovoice is a form of research where people are given cameras and asked to take photographs of particular experiences. One of the goals of Photovoice is to encourage people to reflect on their community, and create conversation about community issues that are important to them. For this project, you will be given 14 days to take 5-8 photographs of objects, places, or other things that represent your **experiences with violence in non/monogamous relationships**. Once you have taken the photographs, we will have an informal interview to talk about what it was like to take the photographs, and the stories and meanings behind each one. The interview will be audio-recorded, and will be approximately 1-3 hours in length.

Risks and Benefits

There are no financial benefits to you from participating in this study; however, you will be contributing to a better understanding of LGBTQA2S+ violence in non/monogamous relationships, and serving as role models for open, engaged, and accountable dialogue around queer community and relationships.

There are minimal risks or discomforts related to this research. Because talking about identity and relationships can sometimes be challenging, I am including phone numbers here that you can use to seek assistance if you would like to speak with someone.

University of Lethbridge Counselling Services 403.317.2845
Lethbridge Family Services Counselling Services 403.327.5724
Distress line of Southwestern Alberta 403.327-7905 or 1.888.787.2880

Your participation in this research is completely voluntary. Your continued participation should be as informed as your initial consent, so you should feel free to ask for clarification or new information throughout your participation. You may choose to not answer any question or you may withdraw from the interview at any time for any reason. If you do this, all information from you will be returned to you or destroyed.

Anonymity and Confidentiality

Several steps will be taken to protect your anonymity and confidentiality. If you agree to participate you will not be identified by name. Prior to beginning the interview recording, we will discuss pseudonyms (alternative names) that you would like to use. All of the information collected in this study will be kept in a locked cabinet or on a password-protected computer, and only I will have access to them. The interview transcripts will be made available for you to review. You will have one month from the date of your interview to make further commentary or redact information for anonymity. Collected information from interviews will be retained for 12 months from the completion of the study before being deleted.

This interview will be open-ended in format, which means you will be asked questions to which you can respond in your own words, sharing as much or as little of your experience as you wish. The interview will be recorded and I might take notes during the interview. You may ask for the recording to be stopped at any time.

There may be instances when I may be obligated by law to report, to law enforcement or another agency, information revealed as a result of the research. Questions likely to result in reportable activities will be flagged and you will be given the option to skip these questions. Before questions directly addressing violence, I will outline the instances where reporting will be required, and remind you that you don’t need to disclose that information. If you begin disclosing reportable information, I will again remind you that you don’t need to disclose that information.

The results

The photographs and sections from the interviews will be available as a public digital thesis available through the University of Lethbridge library, and presented in both academic and community publications and presentations. At no time, however, will your name be used or any identifying information revealed unless you have given consent. I will give you instructions on how to digitally access the post-defense version of the MA thesis.

With your full consent, your photographs from the PhotoVoice assignment will be displayed in a local art gallery, where you and other participants will be invited to help curate an exhibit. You can decide what photographs get displayed, and how they will be represented. The purpose of this exhibit will be to create awareness outside of academic spaces, and create conversations within the LGBTQA2S+ community. Although we will use pseudonyms, members of the public may recognize the content of your photographs, and your anonymity cannot not be guaranteed. Participation in the exhibit is completely voluntary.

If you require any additional information about this study, please email me at at queernonmonogamyresearch@gmail.com, or contact my supervisor Dr. Suzanne Lenon at suzanne.lenon@uleth.ca. Questions regarding your rights as a participant in this research may be addressed to the Office of Research Ethics, University of Lethbridge (Phone: 403-329-2747 or Email: research.services@uleth.ca). This research project has been reviewed for ethical acceptability and approved by the University of Lethbridge Human Subject Research Committee. Thank you for your time and consideration.

I have read (or have been read) the above information regarding this research study on LGBTQA2S+ experiences of violence in non/monogamous relationships, and consent to participate in this study.

Check the ones that you consent to:

□ Taking photographs as part of a PhotoVoice project
□ The audio-recording of an in-person interview
□ Participation in a community art exhibit

_____ (Printed Name of Participant)
_____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

_____ (Printed Name of Researcher)
_____ (Signature)
_____ (Date)

Jaisie Walker
Graduate Student
University of Lethbridge
Researcher Email: queernonmonogamyresearch@gmail.com

A copy of this consent form has been given to you to keep for your records and reference.

Appendix B: PhotoVoice Prompts

Main Guideline
Think about key memories or feelings that characterize your non/monogamous relationships, particularly in relation to how violence was experienced, how it felt, how you understood and processed it, and how you navigated it with partners and your community. What places, objects, scenes, and settings represent these feelings for you? What story do you want to tell with the photograph(s)?
Deliverables
Up to 5 photographs with accompanying captions and descriptions
Before and while you take photographs, consider:
● What does power look like in your relationships? How does the gender/race/class/ability of you and your partner(s) affect how you approach concerns of safety, boundaries, and violence? ● Do you discuss boundaries and what violence looks/feels like for you with new partners? ● What was/is your experience(s) of violence? ● How did you understand, feel, and process what happened to you? ● How did you communicate with your partner(s) about what happened? ● In what ways did this change how you were navigating non/monogamies together? Did you approach things differently, set new boundaries, keep or end relationships?

● How did you communicate with other people or resources? What were those conversations like?
In preparation for our interview:
● Describe your photo: What is happening in the picture? ● Why did you take a photograph of this? ● What does this photograph tell us about your relationships and your community? ● Can you write a caption to go with each photo that represents its meaning for you?

Appendix C: Recruitment Poster