INSTIGATING COMMUNITIES OF SOLIDARITY: AN EXPLORATION OF PARTICIPATORY, INFORMAL, TEMPORARY URBANISMS

by

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DISSERTATION ABSTRACT

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Title: Instigating Communities of Solidarity: An Exploration of Participatory, Informal, Temporary Urbanisms

This dissertation examines the potential for participatory, informal urbanisms to build collaborative relations across ontological, cultural, and political difference. This research contributes to the field of urban, environmental studies by emphasizing four often underdeveloped aspects of participatory urbanisms. First, I examine the unique affordances offered by temporary, informal urban interventions. Second, I focus on the role of the material artifacts and places of participatory urbanisms in the development of communities of solidarity. Third, the project addresses the ongoing colonial legacy of North American and European cities by foregrounding alternative conceptions of place and emphasizing how the development of North American and European cities is inherently tied to colonization and dispossession. Fourth, this project forms relays between theory and practice to excavate the typically unexamined ontologies that inform urban design, building, and dwelling.

I analyze recent scholarship and social activism at the intersection of North American, Indigenous philosophies of and Euro-Western, posthumanist, new materialist theory. I argue that these emerging fields neglect community participation in the built environment, despite their emphases on social justice, relationality, place, and material conditions. I test my hypothesis that informal, urban practices are critical spaces of social theory production through two case studies. First, “The Kitchen on the Run” is a project

in Germany that supports refugee and local resident community-building through group cooking events held outdoors in public squares by way of a mobile shipping container kitchen. Second, "The Lummi Nation House of Tears Carvers Totem Pole Journey" is an Indigenous approach to building solidarity through public events in towns and cities centered around a totem pole temporarily installed at event sites.

I argue that, at small and momentary scales, collective urban design interventions are experiments that test various methods for the co-production of space and subjectivity. Particularly in situations of disaster and disruption, engagement with the places of everyday life in experimental or novel activities creates moments that escape the confines of expectation. These activities can instigate cultures of solidarity that include urban places and the more-than-human world in support of urban resilience in the face of increasing social-environmental instability.

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CHAPTER I. SITUATING THE PROJECT

The Care that Tragedy Provokes

Creating Sacred Spaces for Healing Together

As Dr. Kurt Russo tells the story, shortly after September 11th, 2001, his friend and colleague at the Lummi Nation Treaty and Sovereignty Protection Office Jewell James came to him and said, "We have to do something to help the children whose families died in the attacks" (Kurt Russo, pers. comm., November 20, 2020). Jewell, a master carver and Lummi tribal member, carved a totem pole to help with the needed healing, while Kurt ran logistics. Together, they drove the pole across the continent from the Lummi reservation on the shores of the Salish Sea to a park in New York. Along the way, they made stops in towns and cities, in the rural countryside, and on tribal reservation lands, calling people together to lay their hands in prayer upon the pole. Indigenous people and other people came together in mourning and in grief to share their prayers that their pain could be transformed and that the children whose lives had been forever impacted might gain some respite through this collective care of strangers.

This spontaneous decision to act led to more poles carved by Jewell, which were likewise driven across the country to the site of the plane crash in Pennsylvania, as well as a series of three poles that were designed, carved, and installed as an arch at the Pentagon. These projects were only the beginning. Since 2002, Jewell and his collaborators have carved more than a dozen totem poles in service to bringing people together—to building solidarity—in and with place by engaging with a ceremonial material artifact in what has grown into the Totem Pole Journey.[1]

[1] Recent activities of the Totem Pole Journey are catalogued here: https://www.facebook.com/totempolejourney/.

Figure 1.1. September 2019: The Tokitae Totem Pole on display on the shores of the Salish Sea at the Lummi Reservation. All photos by the author unless otherwise noted.

The most recent Totem Pole Journey arose from a commitment that Jewell and his brother Doug made to help fulfill the wish of an orca whale known as Tokitae, Lolita, and Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut to return home to her natal waters in the Salish Sea (James and James 2020; Figure 1.1).

Tokitae conveyed her wish via a series of psychic messages that were transferred from one human to another, until one human recipient of the message came to Doug and shared Tokitae's story with him. The message led to an ongoing, multi-year initiative to connect with Tokitae and secure her release from her captors, the Miami Seaquarium. For the Seaquarium, Lolita is lucrative property. For people such as Howard Garrett, who founded the nonprofit organization Orca Network and has dedicated his life to securing

her release, Tokitae is a precious individual who has been wrongfully taken from her habitat and family. For Doug, Jewell, and many of the Lummi tribal members, Tokitae is their relative under the water who is crying out for help, and whom they have a sacred obligation to assist (Figure 1.2).

Figure 1.2. Tokitae performing in her tank at the Miami Seaquarium. Photo by the Totem Pole Journey.

To this end, Jewell carved a totem pole in the figure of Tokitae, and Doug, Jewell, Freddie Lane, Kurt, and others have led a multi-year Totem Pole Journey to raise awareness of her plight and advocate for her release. They have driven thousands of miles from Washington to Florida and back, sharing Tokitae's story and their own connection to the orcas of the Salish Sea with thousands of people along the way. Other tribal leaders have filed lawsuits to secure her release. To recognize the tribe's connection

to this orca, the Lummi Nation has given her a Lummi name, Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut refers to the place from which she came.[2] Through this work, thousands of people have not only been introduced to, but are also engaged in the Lummi ontology in which orcas are relatives who can and do communicate with humans. These participants are acting in mutual care to support the Lummi and the orcas (Figure 1.3).

Figure 1.3. June 15, 2019: A Totem Pole Journey event with the Tokitae Totem Pole at the Seattle Art Museum Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Washington.

<u>Building a Shared Space for Making Friends</u>

In 2015, German Chancellor Angela Merkel's "Flüchtlinge Wilkommen" ("Refugees Welcome") pronouncement opened a path for displaced people to enter Germany in search of refuge and safety (Merkel 2015). As a result, thousands of refugees arrived in Berlin from Syria and other countries during the summer of 2015 (Bundesamt

[2] The current Lummi-led effort to return Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut to her home waters in the Salish Sea is documented here: https://sacredsea.org/.

für Migration und Flüchtlinge 2018a). Among the first to arrive were those who made their way to a small park outside Berlin's Landesamt für Gesundheit und Soziales (LaGeSo), a government building where they had been instructed to go for assistance. These refugees had arrived most recently by train, car, and on foot from Hungary, where they had been prevented from entering that country (Häberlen 2016).

LaGeSo was not prepared to receive these people, and so the refugees waited outside on the park lawn. Four years later, Katarina (pseudonym used to protect privacy), a staffer at Moabit Hilft, a neighborhood organization with an office in a small building at the back side of the government complex that surrounded the park, recalled those days in detail as we talked at the common table in the neighborhood center main room (Katarina, pers. comm., August 22, 2019). Katarina described how the Moabit Hilft group watched while refugees waited with nothing to eat or drink or any sense of what would happen to them. To offer help in the moment, Katarina and her colleagues brought water, oranges, and other snacks to the park and distributed them to the people there. They found translators. They put out a call to neighborhood residents as night approached and no sleeping accommodations had yet been made. Some neighbors brought sleeping bags and tents, and others offered their homes for people to stay.

This is what the global crisis of forced migration in the early 21st century looked like in one city park in northern Europe on a few summer days in 2015. At the time, the government systems could not or did not meet the needs of the people who arrived in the square—many with young children, some traveling alone, all with little idea of what was to happen to them. Häberlen (2016) describes the chaotic days in front of LaGeSo that summer as hundreds of Berliners showed up and offered their homes to families who

needed a place to sleep as days of “making friends.” Presented with this moment of disruption, Berliners formed a spontaneous care response to crisis that catapulted Germany into the headlines as a growing wave of local residents showed up to help. That care has extended now for six years, as hundreds—if not thousands—of local initiatives have emerged to help refugees integrate in local communities in Germany.

The Kitchen on the Run project formed from these early days of the refugee influx to Germany in 2015. In 2016, the Kitchen was officially launched as a project to create a neutral space for refugees and locals to meet in everyday urban places in Berlin and share the conviviality fostered by cooking and eating together (Figure 1.4).[3]

While many local efforts to integrate refugees and locals work on a model of shared meals based on the idea that cultural and language barriers can be overcome through the perennial power of food to turn strangers into friends, the Kitchen on the Run

Figure 1.4. September 2019: The Kitchen on the Run in Rendsburg, Germany.

[3] The Kitchen on the Run is now run as a project of a German nongovernmental organization called Über den Tellerand. Project activities are documented here: https://kitchenontherun.org/en/.

brought the importance of shared *place* into the equation. By installing a shipping container kitchen in the center of a public square, the Kitchen created a liminal space that sought to bring newcomers and locals together as equals. Now in its sixth year, the project instigates the formation of communities of newcomers and longer-term locals through events in public squares and supports ongoing programming following the kitchen's departure. The project now operates with a satellite network of about thirty-five local groups throughout Germany.

Introduction

The two vignettes that I have shared here at the start of this dissertation illustrate the primary motivation for this project, which is to develop an account of how it might be possible to come together in the everyday to make new ways of living that are worthy of these times of increasing instability, disaster, and disruption. These two stories of the Totem Pole Journey and the Kitchen on the Run showcase the spontaneous and emergent nature of local responses to the growing challenges of the present, particularly as they relate to urgent crises. These stories demonstrate that responses are often the result of an affective urge to help, to care, and even just participate in the moment. These urges and these moments traverse identity, difference, and irreconcilability. Importantly, each story illustrates how the more-than-human, the material—and sometimes mundane—artifacts and the physical places in which these activities occur are not merely props, but key actors in the story. They also hint at the potential for these spontaneous moments to transform their participants and cultivate the conditions of longer-term alliances and actions. They show how collective healing—a form of solidarity—can emerge through everyday urban practices that include ceremony and conviviality.

It would be naive to ignore that crisis also prompts the most horrific kinds of reactions at local and broader levels. There is no need to list the atrocities committed in times of crisis, as they are pervasive. For example, though, in addition to those who reached out to assist newcomers to Germany in 2015, more than 1,000 acts of arson were committeed at refugee shelters and other refugee facilities within the first year of arrivals (Häberlen 2016, 55). The point of this dissertation, though, is to track what happens when things go otherwise, how it is that sometimes—often, even—solidarity erupts spontaneously.

Projects like the Kitchen on the Run and the Totem Pole Journey operate in a liminal time just past the initial outburst of action and somewhere before the stratification of extraordinary moments into the commonplace. By presenting an alternative to the alleged status quo reactions of self-protection and violence, these projects and many others offer guidance for instigating solidarity through participatory urban practices that include the more-than-human world.

In this dissertation, I examine how cultures of solidarity can form through participatory, temporary, everyday urbanisms. Specifically, I focus on the roles of place and material artifacts in these activities. A culture of solidarity is not so much a political structure as it is a collective propensity for care. In this sense, solidarity operates on an affective register. Solidarity passes through individual acts, policies, projects, programs, manifestos, and marches. In this regard, solidarity is momentary, and a culture of solidarity is one that cultivates the conditions for such moments.

For the purposes of this project, urbanisms refer to the collective human activities of imagining, designing, creating, caring for, and inhabiting the built environments—that

is, the places—of villages, towns, cities, and metropolises. Everyday, participatory urbanisms operate outside of customary, formal urban development regimes and are conducted collectively by the denizens of a place in explicit or implied partnership with that place. They often take the form of mutual aid based on an ethics of care, particularly when initiated in response to a disaster. These kinds of activities demonstrate the necessity for collective care and its latent potential. While care practices are typically considered part of the private sphere, they are also important parts of public life and public space (Williams 2020). Williams (2020) argues for urban theory grounded in a feminist ethics of care "that focuses on maintaining, continuing and repairing our worlds in the here and now in order to bring more caring worlds into being" (2). Temporary urbanisms take place in the here and now, often with the express goals of mutual aid and collective care.

Human existence necessarily includes relationships with the nonhuman world, including places. The pluriverse of numerous sorts of relationships among humans and nonhumans that comprises the Earth includes a multitude of resulting ethical modes of existence. As human and nonhuman elements of the pluriverse interact, new modes are instigated or emerge. Contemporary urban life is characterized by increasing alienation and precarity from place and from each other that registers at spiritual, cultural, economic, political, and ecological levels, as well as the level of the subject or self. These urban conditions of alienation and precarity go hand-in-hand with the growing conditions of oppression and environmental destruction prevalent around the Earth.

While everyday urban life in North America and Europe is largely marked by increasing alienation and precarity in relation to place, participatory urbanisms attempt to

cultivate alternative social and spatial arrangements within the built environment of towns and cities. Within the broader field of participatory urbanism, temporary, informal urbanism responds to immediate circumstances of disruption, displacement, and disaster. Temporary urbanisms are those that from the outset seek to be impermanent, and therefore encourage experimentation with new ways of engaging the more-than-human and human. These kinds of activities are ubiquitous in North America and Europe; yet, due to their typically small-scale, fleeting nature, they are also often hardly perceptible components of the built environment. This is also a generative field that encourages experimentation in urban design and inhabitation in ways that are typically disallowed by larger-scale, permanent urban development schemes.

While these sorts of efforts seek to build engagement, collectivity, and even ownership among human urban inhabitants, Euro-Western conceptions of place and the physical world that attribute agential capacity only to humans and assign only extrinsic value to nonhuman nature permeate the majority of the field. Additionally, ongoing colonial legacies and Indigenous land sovereignty are largely neglected in these movements that seek to assert collective rights to the spaces and places of the city.

My Contribution

In this dissertation, I examine participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms for their potential to develop ethical, relational cultures of solidarity that can act as antidotes to global and local crisis and catastrophe. While immediate crises such as climate change, violence, and forced displacement are regional and global in scale, the impacts are always lived locally, by specific people with specific material conditions, in specific places. I argue that these local situations are exactly the sites from which new sorts of

relationships and communities can emerge. My work does not dismiss national and international initiatives, but rather emphasizes the importance of local agency in the production of resilient societies.

My hypothesis is that collective urban design interventions at small and momentary scales are experiments that test various methods for the co-production of urban places and more-than-human solidarity. Particularly in situations of disaster, disruption, and uncertainty, engagement with the places of everyday life in experimental or novel activities creates moments that escape the confines of expectation—which, in turn, cultivate the conditions for the emergence of new ways of being. These activities can sometimes instigate cultures of solidarity across humans and nonhumans. New, ethical modes of existence can emerge from these interventions.

Other outcomes are also possible. For example, collective design interventions at the small and momentary scales are experiments can produce destructive, violent modes of living. There is a danger in experimenting, in that things can go badly; globally speaking, in many ways, things *are* going badly. The status quo is producing destruction and violence in increasing rates and scales. Experiments are necessary processes in the search for adequate responses to global crisis, and antidotes are urgently needed.

My project contributes to urban theory and practice by emphasizing four often underdeveloped aspects of participatory urbanism. First, I examine the unique affordances offered by *temporary*, *informal* urban interventions. Second, I focus on the role of the *material artifacts and places* of participatory urbanisms in the development of communities of solidarity. Third, I emphasize approaches that address the ongoing *colonial legacy* of North American and European cities by foregrounding alternative

conceptions of place and by considering how the development of North American and European cities is inherently tied to colonization and dispossession of both North America and much of the rest of the Earth. My study includes an analysis of Indigenous efforts within the everyday urban environment to celebrate, reclaim, and rebuild cultures and connections to place. Fourth, this project consists of *relays between theory and practice* in order to excavate the typically unexamined ontologies that inform how urban spaces are conceived and lived.

As an urban planner and designer, my work experience has been in the field of participatory urbanism. Informed by this practical experience, I argue that participatory urbanisms produce theory, as well as new sorts of subjectivities and urban spaces. Informal, temporary urbanisms in particular offer opportunities to experiment with various sorts of human-material interactions.

Through an analysis of several contemporary theoretical approaches and two case studies of real-world projects, I explore whether and how participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms can instigate cultures of solidarity that can (1) withstand socio-ecological crisis conditions that are increasing in frequency and scale and (2) generate alternative socio-ecological arrangements within which human and nonhuman life might not only persist, but flourish.

What is at Stake Conceptually in This Contribution

In this chapter, I provide an initial cartography of the conceptual and actual temporary-material-urban-solidarity assemblage in which my dissertation takes place. I focus on how this assemblage is problematized because I agree with philosopher Rosi Braidotti’s assessment that we lack the conceptual tools needed to adequately deal with

the present (Braidotti 2011, 2014). It is neither appropriate nor possible to address social-environmental issues whose origins are multifaceted and international with approaches built from ontologies outdated even within the dominant culture that fostered them. Concepts emerge from theoretical fields that are formed in specific cultural contexts. Dwelling in a pluriverse requires thinking through and with difference; therefore, it is important to become adept at cross-cultural conceptual analysis, despite the perils of oversimplification and appropriation.

To this end, this initial cartography is developed through a transversal mapping of the assemblage elements across and through posthumanist, new materialist, North American Indigenous, and urban theory. Through this mapping, the project crosses several disciplinary boundaries, including geography, philosophy, and urban design and planning. This project requires the interrogation and re-figuration of several concepts key to participatory, temporary, everyday urbanism. These concepts both produce and are produced by the material activities that I examine in this paper.

As Escobar (2017) notes, only those immersed in the dominant culture are unaware that they operate within an ontology. In common urban practice, ontological assumptions and their accompanying concepts carry on almost unnoticed. Concepts are both formed by and exert force on the world, thereby shaping how humans interact with it and each other. Their cultural and political specificity goes unexamined by dominant paradigm practitioners; this specificity is key to developing pluriversal approaches to the urban environment. In the following sections, I stake out some basic attributes of these concepts within each tradition with the full disclaimer that these are initial markers that are to be interrogated against each other throughout the dissertation.

Solidarity

In this dissertation, the notion of solidarity, like the other key components of the conceptual assemblage at play, is analyzed across various kinds of social-spatial practices and philosophical traditions. In common terms, solidarity generally refers to a kind of mutual support among people with some type of shared interest. Solidarity involves an individual's commitment to another's well-being or a group's commitment to act to advance the shared interests of its members. Acting in solidarity *with*, though, often involves taking a position *against* other humans, policies, attitudes, or even external, nonhuman events such as acts of nature. Solidarity from such a position reinforces Euro-Western conceptions of autonomy, identity-based politics, and the individual.

In contrast, solidarity as conceptualized in this dissertation refers to both acts of alliance and the affective urge toward mutual care. In this sense, solidarity is impersonal, pre-personal, or apersonal. It precedes or circumvents identity. It is an affective desire to connect that can appear as a predisposition to respond to threat with acts of mutual aid. A culture of solidarity is characterized by a collective commitment to mutual care, drawn from conceptual starting points of nonunitary or relational subjectivity that extends through the human and the more-than-human.

Russian philosopher and naturalist Pëtr Alexeyevich Kropotkin's (1902) treatise on mutual aid starts with his impression of solidarity as a primary, fundamental component of the human collective:

> But it is not love and not even sympathy on which Society is based in mankind. It is the conscience—be it only at the stage of an instinct—of human solidarity. It is the unconscious recognition of the force that is borrowed by each man from the

> practice of mutual aid; of the close dependency of every one's happiness upon the happiness of all; and of the sense of justice, or equity, which brings the individual to consider the rights of every other individual as equal to his own. (xiv, emphasis mine)

While Kropotkin's work is centered more within the tradition of justice, rights, and identity-based mutualism than within the Deleuzian, Braidottian sorts of affect theory I consider here, Kropotkin does recognize the "instinctual" and "unconscious recognition of the force" of solidarity that precedes rights and justice and even love (Kropotkin 1902, xiv).

Solidarity, as it appears here, is based on a starting point of personhood or subjectivity as inherently multiple, intertwined, and malleable. Solidarity emerges out of interconnections. Solidarity is made. Haraway (2016) bypasses typical discourse on political solidarity by introducing the term *poiesis*, also developed by Braidotti (2013), as an important concept in discussions about distributed agency that decenters the human individual and emphasizes mutualism. Haraway introduces poiesis in her discussion of what she terms *tentacular thinking* with the briefest of definitions—poiesis means "the making" (31). The present is marked by an Earth made in *sympoiesis*, in contrast to *autopoiesis*: "Poiesis is symchthonic, sympoietic, always partnered all the way down, with no starting and subsequently interacting "units"" (33). For Haraway, the interactions of the Earth are sympoietic; rehabilitation and sustainability—and, I would add, resilience—require sympoiesis (33).

Sympoiesis—making with—is important for my conception of solidarity. Subjectivity is made. Solidarity is made. The material environment—the built

environment—is also made. These three spheres co-make (i.e., make with) each other. Sympoiesis is a concept that conveys these sorts of intra-actions. Haraway connects these newest terms with her older concept of *worlding*. Sympoiesis is a worlding operation in which all are involved (55). Haraway elaborates, "Nothing makes itself. . . . Earthlings are never alone" (58). *Worlding* is *becoming*, and for Haraway, becoming is always *becoming-with*. Acting in mutual support is a function of an ontology of relationality, not a secondary attribute of autonomous individuality.

Solidarity in Colonial Contexts

Solidarity must include a recognition of the ongoing settler-colonial context of North America and the ongoing colonial legacy of Europe. This context continues to influence the displacement of people from their homelands in search of safety and a means for life. Solidarity in the urban contexts of North America and Europe must include a reckoning with these legacies of displacement and occupation. There are inherent conflicts in this proposition, however—namely, that towns and cities in North America are a fundamental tool of ongoing displacement and erasure of Native peoples. In Europe, the current refugee crisis is largely a result of migration due to economic and political instability resulting from violent European interventions across the rest of the world. As Braidotti (2016) has noted, "The refugee crisis is European colonization coming home to roost."

Urban development as currently practiced in North America perpetuates the erasure of Native peoples (Tuck and Yang 2012). At the same time, this development contributes significantly to the ongoing degradation and destruction of all of Earth's life support systems and is a tool in the dismantling of many sorts of traditional cultures.

Urban development is also part of a concerted effort to prevent the emergence of new forms of culture, Indigenous or otherwise. However, urban development, even in a capitalist context, is not totalizing. Land may be bought and sold, but a place is never completely controlled by any people. Design, building, and dwelling are inherently creative and generative activities; these activities can perpetuate an oppressive and alienating status quo, or they can foster new modes of existence that create new legacies.

In this project, I do not prescribe a specific solution to claims of land tenure on either continent, nor do I specify an approach to reparations for centuries of harm done. Long-term, large-scale restorative justice efforts are necessary and urgently needed (Buxton 2019). The theory of change to be examined in this project is that new imaginaries are necessary—but not sufficient—components of the work required to build more just, resilient, and relational urbanisms. New imaginaries must include new sorts of acts of creating and dwelling in the built environment. This project argues that new forms of alliance can be developed from the humble beginnings of humans coming together to engage across differences in urban places, contested as these spaces are.

Subjectivity

At the core of my approach is the claim that spaces/places and subjectivities co-produce each other. Concepts of subjectivity/self are inextricable from accounts of place, space, and the material world.[4] While there is great diversity between and within European and Indigenous concepts of the self, scholars of Indigenous philosophy, Euro-Western philosophers, geographers, and urban theorists all emphasize the

[4] As noted in a recently published dictionary of geographical concepts, "All geography assumes some theory of subjectivity; even 'objective 'spatial science rests on a theory of subjectivity as a foundation for 'objective 'knowledge. But different theories of the subject provoke different geographical knowledges (and vice versa)" (Johnston et al. 2000, 802).

interrelationships between subjectivity and space/place. The traditions that have grown from and through each of the scholars and projects I discuss share a commitment to the notion of nonunitary subjectivity and distributed agencies, as well as a focus on the specificity of context, including place and time. For the authors I include here, subjectivity extends beyond the bodily boundaries of a human individual; thus, the material world is imbricated in some way. That is, agential capacity is distributed and is part of—but extends beyond—individual and collective human subjectivity. These various ontological assertions are bound up with ethical systems from which politics of solidarity are enacted. Each foregrounds the ways in which the nonhuman and human aspects of existence inform and are informed by each other.

An organizing principle of this dissertation is that the Euro-Western enlightenment ideal of the subject as an autonomous, rationalist, individual human is both inaccurate and implicated as the root justification for—among other harms—centuries of genocidal madness carried out by its proponents. Those working within European traditions to develop alternative conceptual apparatus for the self are reacting to dominant concepts of subjectivity that were historically established as individually bound within the human, and more specifically, a European, heterosexual, able-bodied, male (Braidotti 2013). In contrast, the work of North American Indigenous theorists included here demonstrates a variety of other concepts of subjectivity drawn from a depth of traditions (Watts 2017). By way of a brief introduction, I will here summarize a few indicative perspectives provided by several of the key figures whose work inspires this project.

Native American scholar and activist Vine Deloria, Jr. elucidates several distinguishing features of Indigenous conceptions of subjectivity while still maintaining

that views vary within and across tribal cultures. According to Deloria, because the universe and everything in it is alive, all entities are participants in the ongoing creation of the universe. Deloria (1999b) argues, "We are, in the truest sense possible, creators or co-creators with the higher powers, and what we do has immediate importance for the rest of the universe" (47). Deloria emphasizes that all entities have a responsibility to participate in this ongoing creation. Indigenous epistemologies allow the conclusion that the universe is alive to be made. According to Deloria, Native Americans value direct experience: "Indians knew the universe is alive because they experienced it in everything" (49). For example, according to Deloria, Native Americans knew the Earth as a living being long before the Gaia hypothesis was proposed. The Earth nurtures; therefore, it is alive (49).

Indigenous epistemologies are also intrinsically connected to place. These connections are discussed in *Power and Place: Indian Education in America* (2001), co-authored by Deloria and Daniel Wildcat. In this text, Deloria presents a concept of place defined as "the relationship of things to each other" (23). Place, then, is created *by* and *through* relationships; however, the relationship is not linear. Place also creates the entities that exist in relation with each other. Deloria (1999b) argues that "power and place produce personality" (23). This means that power (also defined as life force), combined with place, produces the entities of creation. Deloria's *Power + Personality = Place* maxim centers the nonhuman world as intrinsically part of what it means to be a person, human or otherwise.

Geographer David Harvey also emphasizes the embeddedness of humans within specific places and historical material conditions. For example, Harvey describes a

(human) subject of capitalism as constructed through the interactions of money, society, time, and space (Johnston et al. 2000, 802). Harvey's (2013) work on the "right to the city" argues that the collective access to urban space is fundamental for collective human well-being. For Harvey, the right to the city redefines the idea of rights from those of individualistic and property-based terms to the idea of the collective (3). The right to the city rests on a nonunitary conception of subjectivity that decenters the human individual in recognition of the dependence on and interdependence with place and others. While Harvey's account recognizes the material and historical force on how human subjectivity forms, unlike Deloria's, there is no consideration of agency that extends beyond the human or a concept of subjectivity of the more-than-human.

Philosopher Rosi Braidotti's (2011, 2013) work to develop a theory of nomadic, posthuman subjectivity forms a cornerstone of my project. In addition, Braidotti's assertions are emblematic of the Deleuzian lineage of posthumanist, vital materialist theorists whose work I address in subsequent chapters. Braidotti's work is inspired by and builds from Gilles Deleuze's philosophy of difference in itself and, more specifically, Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) concepts of nomos/nomad/nomadology and becoming. The nomadic, posthuman subject offers an affirmative, nonunitary vision of the self. Nomadic subjectivity evolves in *The Posthuman* (Braidotti 2013). *The Posthuman* argues that nomadic subjectivity needs more conceptual support. Braidotti claims that social and political movements of postmodernism are symptoms of the crisis of the subject; additionally, they are also the expression of alternatives. These two iterations of present conditions demonstrate "the crises of the majority and the patterns of becoming of the minorities" (37–38). Posthumanisms are multiple, and they represent myriad approaches

to the crisis of the subject; rather than merely critiquing humanism, posthumanisms "create other visions of the self" (38).

More so than the nomadic subject, the figure of the posthuman is developed with emphasis on its nonhuman, nonanthropocentric embeddedness. Braidotti (2013) calls for a posthuman subjectivity that consists of an enlarged sense of interconnection between self and others, including nonhuman or "earth" others (48). She notes that relating to others—both human and nonhuman others—is enhanced by a rejection of self-centered individualism. For Braidotti, the critical posthuman subject is defined within "an eco-philosophy of multiple becomings, a relational subject constituted by and in multiplicity, that is to say a subject that works across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable" (49). In *The Posthuman*, Braidotti emphasizes subjectivity via a *vital materialism*, in addition to the embodied, embedded, and feminist politics of location that were articulated in the earlier text. Here, the notion of self-organization (*autopoiesis*) is introduced and provides more detail regarding the ways in which a self emerges within its embeddedness:

> Why do I stress so much the issue of the subject? Because a theory of subjectivity as both materialist and relational, "nature-cultural" and self-organizing is crucial in order to elaborate critical tools situated to the complexity and contradictions of our times. . . . A serious concern for the subject allows us to take into account the elements of creativity and imagination, desire, hopes, and aspirations (Moore 2011) without which we simply cannot make sense of global culture and its posthuman overtones. We need a vision of the subject that is "worthy of the present." (Braidotti 2013, 52)

Citing Deleuze and Guattari, Braidotti (2013) describes vital materialism as that which enfolds the subject as "the internalized score of cosmic vibration" (56). For Braidotti, recognition of this *monistic ontology* is key to creating alternative schemes to those of anthropocentrism (56). For Braidotti, vital materialism recognizes the inherently nonanthropocentric nature of being; it can be described poetically, as articulated by George Elliot in the phrase "the roar on the other side of silence," or it can be explained as the raw cosmic energy that underscores the making of societies and their subjects (55).

Braidotti's vital materialism draws from Spinoza's monistic ontology. In Braidotti' words,

> A monistic universe refers to Spinoza's central concept that matter, the world and humans are not dualistic entries structured according to principles of internal or external opposition . . . matter is one, driven by the desire for self-expression and ontologically free . . . The main idea is to overcome dialectical oppositions, engendering non-dialectical understandings of materialism itself . . . (Braidotti 2013, 56)

From Spinoza, according to Braidotti, French philosophers of the 1970s were able to reject logics of transcendence and develop the concept of "radical immanence" and an account of matter as both vital and self-organizing (56). It is important to note that in this context, difference in a monistic conception is a difference based on relation to multiple others, rather than a difference from a universal idea of a self, as discussed earlier. Spinozan vital materialism does not rely on a dualistic conception of self/other, this world/otherworldy, etc. Instead, the self-organizing nature of matter—its vital attribute—necessitates an understanding of difference in itself.

Braidotti (2013) notes that contemporary science also recognizes the self-organizing aspects of matter. Braidotti discusses how cellular biology shows that matter is self-organizing; it is *autopoietic*. According to a monistic philosophy, matter is also structurally relational and thereby connected to various environments (Braidotti 2013, 59–60). Like all matter, these autopoietic forces also make up humans, but they are not contained within a single individual self. Braidotti refers to these forces as *zoe* (60). Life, for Braidotti, is *zoe*, which is a "dynamic and generative force" (86). In terms of subjectivity, this means that the self is relational, as well as that the forces that impact and form a subject are not bounded within the human itself.

The challenge is to think across and through these theories that are sometimes at odds with each other in order to figure out how to work and live together. Arturo Escobar's (2017) efforts to develop theories of the pluriverse offer a model for how to think subjectivity across ontologies. Like many of the authors that I engage here, Escobar's proposition emerges from a critique of Euro-Western philosophical traditions. Escobar claims that the tendencies of this tradition are typically situated in terms such as "mechanistic (worldview), reductionistic (science), positivistic (epistemology), and more recently, computationalist (model)" (80). Escobar argues that contemporary design theory and practice are rooted in these conceptual approaches and that they form the "default setting" in which design occurs (83). Escobar distills "four fundamental beliefs in the modern onto-epistemic order" that result from the rationalist, dualistic history; the first of these is that of the individual (83), which the author describes as "one of the most profound—and even damaging—consequences of the rationalistic tradition is the belief in the individual" (93).

Through these examples of the numerous world traditions that approach the world through relationality or interconnectivity, rather than individuality, the following argument against individuality is proposed:

> The fact is that we are not just individuals; while each of us is indeed a singular person, we inevitably exist as knots or relays in networks—nay, weaves—of relations. The communal is the name we give to these entanglements and weaves. There is no contradiction between the singular person and the communal as the space within which she or he always exists in relation. (Escobar 2017, 200)

Escobar's emphasis in this text is on establishing the pluriverse itself as the basis from which new subjectivities can, do, and will emerge. More specifically, Escobar argues that ontological design can, does, and will inform conceptions of the self.

Excavating Urban Ontologies

I contend that developing resilient forms of living and dwelling in cities requires urbanists to continuously examine our ontological and ethical assumptions. Instruction in metaphysics is not part of city planning, urban design, or architecture curricula, nor does the topic arise in the typical course sequence for a degree in real estate development. In practice, the constraints placed by the practicalities of an urban development project—including regulations, the client vision, the profits demanded by investors, and the general status quo—prevent anything but the most cursory glances at the ontological inspiration for or implications of a project. These ontological underpinnings are always present; it takes only practice to begin to perceive them.

Two everyday English words—*place* and *site*—reveal the implications of the metaphysics embedded in how the contemporary American built environment is created

and functions. As commonly understood, a site is an empty location at which something either happens or is positioned (e.g., the site of the space shuttle launch, the site of the new hospital). In typical practice, a site is cleared, graded, and otherwise scrubbed in preparation of a new project. Architecture and urban design begin with site analysis, which is often a process of listing the constraints placed on the designer by the inability to begin their creative process unencumbered by topography, trees, or other living things. A place, even in settler parlance, implies something more than *tabula rasa*; a place is never a blank slate. Even in common settler language, the word place holds connotations of relationships. A place is never empty; it is made of living things, memories, material objects, and peoples.

This slightly forced distinction between site and place illustrates the heart of Vine Deloria's (2012) call to recognize the interrelatedness of reality through attention to the ontological underpinnings of the physical world. Deloria claims that an examination of ontological assumptions is a necessary starting point for building ways of living and thinking that transcend cultural knowledge boundaries. In agreement with Deloria, I emphasize that a pluriversal world requires a pluriverse of ontologies, rather than a singular dominant approach. Respectful engagement with Indigenous ontologies and intentional analysis of current practice through the lens provided by posthumanist theory offers a way for those urbanists steeped in an instrumentalist view of the material world to begin to recognize their positionality and to notice that the world abounds with alternatives to the outdated, inaccurate, mechanistic views on which urban practice and theory are based.

Why North America and Europe

In this research, I focus on everyday urbanism in North America and western Europe, with specific case studies in the Pacific Northwest of the United States and in Germany. A primary organizing premise of this dissertation is that material conditions—including urban places, subjectivities, and theories—are constituted by relays between each other. The theories, subjectivities, and material conditions of North America and Europe are intertwined, but distinct; therefore, they provide an opportunity for cross-examination. Another organizing premise of this dissertation is that the specifics of local circumstances result in an endless array of variation which produces the pluriverse that makes up the Earth. This, then, is a cross-continental comparison of the varying ways that subjectivities, material conditions, and theories can manifest cultures of solidarities.

Furthermore, as I discuss in the following pages, both regions embody the contradictions of the Enlightenment legacy based on a dominant, Euro-Western culture that instrumentalizes the Earth and its humans; yet, both regions are rife with alternative ontologies that provide antidotes to the very destruction being perpetuated. My goal is to articulate some of these alternative theoretical traditions in comparison to one another in order to continue to call out the contingency of dominant conditions, but also with the goal that the cross-examination will result in productive possibilities for alliances across differences.

On a less esoteric register, the towns and cities of each region embody the contradictions of contemporary, neo-liberal, state-sponsored capitalism. Both North America and Europe are coping with an ongoing colonial legacy that—among many other issues—continues to produce the massive forced displacement of people around the

planet. These forcibly displaced peoples are internal to the nation-states in these regions, such as the millions of Native Americans who have been removed from their traditional homelands. Forcibly displaced people from other regions are also seeking safe harbor in increasing numbers to both North America and Europe as a result of foreign policy that has produced economic or political instability to the extent that people have no choice but to flee their homelands. In addition to these growing numbers of physically displaced people within both North American and Europe, millions upon millions of citizens live in increasingly economic and physically precarious conditions. This displacement and precarity, as well as the confines of daily life subsumed by work and increasingly defined by consumer exchanges, produces alienation from place and one another that is sometimes on par with the most dystopian science fiction tales. This alienation sometimes registers as a basic lack of purpose or meaning in day-to-day life. In addition, each region is experiencing rapid change in both urban form and the ethnic and cultural composition of its cities. In these ways, North America and Europe are facing similar challenges.

Although the governance and form of towns and cities in western Europe and North America exhibit enormous variety, participatory, temporary, everyday urbanisms are common throughout each region, as are the subcultures of creativity, experimentation, and mutual aid/care that produce them. My analysis draws from decades of exchange between the two regions in both scholarship and practice regarding participatory urbanisms.

Lastly, my project includes an auto ethnographical methodology. I have intentionally focused on towns and cities in North America and western Europe, and

more specifically in Germany and the Pacific Northwest, because these are places and cultures with which I have some direct experience. I first visited Berlin in 2006 to study how people in that city make use of public, urban places, including plazas, parks, and city sidewalks. This trip cemented my fascination with informal urbanisms and informed the trajectory of my professional life since then. During my subsequent visit to Berlin in 2016—by chance—I first saw the bright blue shipping container that is the Kitchen on the Run, the first of the two case studies included in this research. Both my mother's and my father's families emigrated to the United States from Germany five or six generations ago, and I grew up with the remnants of German heritage prominent in my families' stories of themselves. As part of a research trip for my dissertation work, in 2019, I visited my great-great-grandmother's hometown in northern Germany for the first time.

I have lived in the Pacific Northwest off and on for twenty-three years. My master's degree in urban planning culminated in a nine-month study of informal, participatory, temporary uses of vacant spaces in Portland, Oregon, the city that I still call home. Earlier, a semester field study program on Vancouver Island, British Columbia, introduced me to the lifeways of the Indigenous peoples of the Salish Sea and neighboring regions. This introduction had a transformative impact on my own perspective, which has remained with me ever since and influenced my effort to connect with the Lummi-led Totem Pole Journey. My initial encounter with the Totem Pole Journey in 2014, in turn, led to me including the project as one of my dissertation case studies. These long-term connections and this positionality informed my approach and auto ethnographical analysis.

Why North American Indigenous Philosophies and New Materialist Posthumanisms

The project design rests on my proposition that the concepts, methods, and commitments of both North American Indigenous philosophies and new materialist, posthumanist theory are fundamental tools for a just and resilient urbanism, by which I mean the active practices of design, planning, building, and dwelling in cities. I chose these broad lineages for this project for four primary reasons. First, these traditions have emerged from two regions of the Earth that I have described above as important for this study: North America and Europe. Second, both traditions have developed extensive accounts of nonunitary or relational subjectivity that extends to the more-than-human. Both emphasize place and the material world in their accounts of the human and the social. Third, the ethics of relational co-existence are embedded within the ontologies of each tradition; in a variety of ways, each tradition offers ethical systems that extend across human and nonhuman domains. Fourth, each attends to the concept of emergence and to the potential for the unexpected and indeterminate to evoke new modes of existence.

More than 500 tribes, and at least as many Indigenous philosophical traditions, continue to flourish on the North American continent (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). Through this work, I seek to celebrate this multitude of ontologies, rather than to generalize; to this end, one of the two case studies included here focuses on a particular perspective of some members of the Lummi Nation, rather than asserting broad generalizations about many traditions. However, several characteristics extend across tribal traditions and are recognized as general qualities of Indigenous ontologies in North America. In general, North American Indigenous philosophical conceptions of the material world and human

subjectivity differ vastly from notions of human individuality and disconnect from nature than the dominant Euro-Western ontologies that continue to pervade urbanism in North America and Europe. Therefore, in addition to my specific focus on Lummi ontologies and practices, I draw from several 20th and 21st century Native American authors whose work contextualizes what can be understood as an Indigenous worldview within the North American context (Atleo 2004, 2011; Deloria 1999a, 2012; Deloria and Wildcat 2001; Norton Smith 2014; Pratt 2006; Watson and Huntington 2008; Watts 2017). In this exchange between specificity and generalization, my goal is to showcase some of the myriad, well-developed alternatives to what is now acknowledged—even within the Euro-Western tradition—as an outdated notion of the relations between subjectivity and place. Here, my primary concern is that such outdated notions continue to form the foundation of how the built environment is produced and how humans relate with it and each other.

Several aspects of Indigenous philosophies are markedly distinct from other systems discussed here. First, epistemologies emphasize collective knowledge that is obtained for the benefit of the group through direct experiences with places and other entities across long extents of time. Second, agential capacities are attributed to the nonhuman and nonbiotic entities of the world, and there is a shared understanding that aliveness extends beyond biotic organisms. Third, a sense of aliveness is bound up in various spiritual and religious traditions; this means that the nature of existence is spiritual or religious. Relatedly, tribal traditions recognize nonphysical aspects of existence—that is, the concept that aliveness includes nonphysical, spiritual beings as well as beings in physical form. Fourth, the aliveness of all things means that all entities

are recognized as persons; this means that all relationships—as relationships between persons—have an ethical component, and these relationships are marked by reciprocal agreements. Fifth, places themselves are recognized as living, expressive entities (Atleo 2004, 2011; Deloria [1973] 2003, [1979] 2012; Deloria and Wildcat 2001; Kimmerer 2013, 2017; Larsen and Johnson 2016; Marker 2018; Norton Smith 2014; Watson and Huntington 2008; Watts 2013).

Within both Euro-Western scientific and philosophical traditions themselves, the notion of an autonomous, rationalist, individual human has long been dismissed as incomplete—if not highly inaccurate. Similarly, both Euro-Western science and some veins of Euro-Western philosophy recognize that the human and nonhuman world function more as a continuum than a set of discrete objects and posit that the more-than-human world exerts influence and even agency to a vastly greater extent than historically acknowledged. In philosophy and social theory, the field of posthumanist, new materialism offers a redress to instrumentalist attitudes toward the nonhuman and nonbiotic world. In general terms, posthumanist, new materialist thought decenters the human and conceives of a world of relation or vectors of flows, rather than one of discrete entities. As with Indigenous concepts, my project focuses on specificity within posthumanist new materialisms rather than attempting to generalize. I focus on a critical materialist posthumanism within the Deleuzian lineage, particularly as developed by Rosi Braidotti. I also work with Donna Haraway's (2016) "tentacular" notions of the self as developed in her recent work, *Staying with the Trouble*. While Haraway is no Deleuzian, Haraway's and Braidotti's works serve as different facets within a conceptual prism that cast light out into new territories of human and more-than-human relations.

Recent scholarship and social activism have suggested the potential for a productive exchange between these North American, Indigenous philosophies of place and Euro-Western, posthumanist, new materialist theories. Each intellectual field offers insight into the co-production of subjectivity and place. Engaging across the two also provides a method for pluriversal thinking and activism that embraces alliances across difference. Some posthumanist scholarship has been criticized as extractive of Indigenous knowledge, and much work remains to be done in order to center Indigenous knowledge on its own terms.

In addition to the serious issues of appropriation of Indigenous theory into Euro-Western philosophy without proper contextualization, permission, and acknowledgement, thus far, towns, cities, and the built environment in general have been peripheral components of both sets of theories and the conversations about points of intersection between them. I contend that everyday urban practices, rooted in alliances between Indigenous and non-Indigenous North Americans and Europeans and migrants, can help to develop methods for respectful, nonexploitative, cross-cultural theoretical engagements. Through this dissertation, I posit that informal urban practices are important spaces of theory production; these spaces contribute crucial urban perspectives to the fields of Indigenous philosophy and new materialist, posthumanist theory.

Why Focus on Urbanism

This is a study about how people develop alliances with each other and the more-than-human world—including place—in situations where they previously did not have relationships. While towns and cities are perpetuators of precarity and alienation and sites of forced relocation for the dispossessed, they are also the loci of affirmative, collective

acts that build relationality in and through place (Jacobs [1961] 1992; Mumford 1961; Sennett 2018). Cities foster the potential for collective action across disparate communities—not just as a function of the relatively close physical proximity of those living in them, but because the urban built environment itself is a manifestation of collective action and interdependence that in turn necessitates collaborative ways of dwelling. Even seemingly mundane urban infrastructure, such as drinking water and sewer services, are reflections of a profound interconnectedness and an equally profound commitment to mutual consideration (Kaika 2005). The fact that these extremely vulnerable infrastructure systems are rarely tampered with by even the most agitated urban residents reflects the commitment that still exists to mutualism in urban settings.

In the United States, urban development as currently practiced operates within the confines of a settler-state controlled, capital-driven economic and legal setting that instrumentalizes not only human life, but also the more-than-human Earth itself. New types of antidotes are needed to ameliorate the worst devastation of the Capitalocene.[5] Despite a destructive status quo, the juxtaposition of various cultures and agendas in place and with intention can foster the development of those antidotes. Urbanists—including planners, designers, builders, dwellers, and scholars—are tasked with alleviating social inequity and halting environmental degradation, and they are simultaneously equipped with the latent potential for collective transformation.

Through this project, I aim to contribute to research and practice in participatory urbanism by interrogating the ethical-ontological assumptions underpinning contemporary urban practice. In addition, I argue that contemporary urban practices are

[5] Haraway's term

important sites of theory production in themselves. Urban practice and urban theory are poorly integrated into existing conceptions of the co-production of space and subjectivity within the Euro-Western lineage of posthumanist, new materialisms. Urbanism has historically played a peripheral role within Indigenous theories and movements, but urban Indigenous movements have begun to flourish in recent decades (Peters and Andersen 2013; Walker et al. 2013).

Why Participatory, Everyday, Temporary Urbanism

In the face of massive, growing, global issues, my choice to focus on small and momentary acts in everyday places was based on several reasons. First, we live in increasingly uncertain times. Urban resilience—the ability for a community to persist, and perhaps, flourish—in the face of frequent emergencies, disasters, and disruptions requires nimbleness at the local level. Experimentation is needed, and everyday urbanisms are experiments that contribute to the development of new conceptual tools and ways of dwelling. Participatory urbanisms attempt to cultivate alternative social and spatial arrangements within the built environment of towns and cities. Temporary, informal urbanism responds to immediate circumstances of disruption, displacement, and disaster. These are generative practices that encourage experimentation in urban design and inhabitation in ways that are typically disallowed by larger-scale, permanent urban development schemes.

Second, I contend that alienation and precarity are key symptoms of larger crisis that can be addressed through place-based practices in everyday spaces. Third, because the Earth is a pluriverse, a multitude of responses are needed. That is, localized, specific, contextualized actions are necessary. Among these necessary actions are responses

centered around principles of mutual aid in which community residents join together, rather than behaving as though everyone is only responsible for themselves. Lastly, at the heart of this approach is the conviction that it is crucial to devise new forms of living from a commitment to camaraderie, conviviality, and even joyfulness. The types of everyday urbanism that I examine in this paper emphasize collaboration and celebration as ends in themselves and as methods for instigating social transformation.

Participatory, everyday urbanism is sometimes referred to as *tactical urbanism* (Lydon and Garcia 2015) or *informal urbanism*. Temporary urbanism forms a smaller subset within these fields. Informal urbanism, while perhaps historically always a component of city fabrics, has proliferated in previous decades in the global south in the form of slums, shantytowns, etc. as a function of mass migrations of population concentrations to urbanized regions (Boano and Alstofo 2016; Prescott et al. 2013). In North America and Europe, informal urbanism takes on a different tone; here, it is typically conducted on smaller spatial scales, with less of an emphasis on meeting immediate needs for shelter or housing. In the early to mid-2000s, a proliferation of informal projects in northern Europe capitalized on the "shrinking cities" of former industrial areas of Germany, such as the Ruhr region, with particular focus on the availability of vacant and unused land and buildings in Berlin and the city's long-established artistic and alternative social cultures. These informal urbanist interventions grew from a longer and deeper history of squatter and collectivist or communal movements of the 1960s and 1970s such as The Arena in Vienna in 1976—some of which, such as the Christiana community in Copenhagen, Denmark, continue to exist in the present time.

Ranging in purpose and intent from projects that seek to establish alternative modes of inhabitation and community, to art in public spaces, to those that take advantage of the cheap or free availability of land for commercial or start-up social enterprises, the field of informal urbanism extends from capitalistic approaches to deeply radical commitments to establish alternative modes of existence to the existing states of affairs. Most are collective endeavors, but some are individual artistic, economic, or housing projects. What they share is a desire to create places of autonomy/alternative within the existing fabric of state-controlled, capitalist cities. They differ in their commitments to solidarity and effecting broader scale social change. Some operate within established systems of economics, policy, and permitting. Others—such as the occupation of Alcatraz Island in 1969 by Native American activists, the culture jamming scenes of the 1999s, the Occupy Wall Street movement that briefly flourished in the United States in 2011, and the squatters' movements mentioned above—operate outside of typical planning processes or existing legal parameters.

These movements come primarily from Europe and settler-colonial North America. They largely ignore the settler-colonial conditions of all towns and cities in North America, as well as the colonial history and present conditions that have allowed the trajectory of development in European cities over the past several centuries.

Further, although design by solidarity is in itself a minor subfield, design by solidarity that forefronts awareness of the settler-colonial state society of North America is an even smaller movement. Indigenous and decolonial or anti-colonial urbanisms in North America and Europe are tiny in terms of the number of humans, the area of land, and the scale of projects currently built, and they operate almost entirely outside of the

realm of dominant urbanisms, real estate development, planning policies, and the like. Temporary urbanisms and Indigenous urbanisms, however, share important commitments that include an emphasis on participatory, collective design and decision-making processes.

At the heart of these endeavors is a deeper—although often unstated—acknowledgement of the fundamental necessity of place to existence and a claim that the spaces of towns and cities are part of the Earth in, through, with, and of which all human existence occurs. These commitments go by numerous names, including *right to the city*, *spatial agency*, *self-made cities*, *autonomous design*, and *design by solidarity*. In general, the question of the role of the material itself in the formation of these communities is less frequently examined than the social aspects.

Within the realm of everyday urbanism, temporary urbanism holds a particularly important place in this dissertation. While unplanned and unpermitted uses have always been part of the urban condition, temporary uses are distinguished as those that seek to be impermanent from the outset (Haydn and Temel 2007). Beginning in the early 2000s, a new urban movement emerged around the opportunistic use of space in Northern Europe, particularly in Germany, and especially in Berlin. At this time, Berlin had an abundance of vacant and underutilized lots and buildings. Sometimes with government support, but often without any formal approval, projects began around the city with a variety of uses, including caravan (camper) housing, community centers, event spaces, gardens, squatters living in abandoned buildings, and a beach tiki bar shack on the bank of the Spree River, accessed by walking through a gap in the former Berlin Wall.

The informality and spontaneity of these projects were palpable, and some Berlin governmental districts established programs to support their temporary uses. For example, the district of Marzan-Hellersdorf initiated the Neuland Project (New Land Project) and sought to match space users with available land within the district (Urban Catalyst). Design firms and researchers also participated in the scene, and a number of publications discussed the phenomena. In part, as a result of the financial recession of 2008, temporary urbanism grew in popularity in the United States in the years around 2008–2012. The Occupy Wall Street movement in 2011–2012 could be considered part of this movement of temporary urbanism, which at its heart, seeks to make alternatives evident.

Jeremy Nèmeth and Joern Langhorst start their 2013 article on temporary uses with a vignette of Berlin's Tempelhof airport, which created an enormous available space in the center of the city after its decommission in 2007. Spontaneous activities arose on the huge fields of the airstrips, and the city eventually adopted an interim use plan for the airport as a public park (Nèmeth and Langhorst 2013). Several years later, in 2015, when the first large groups of refugees began arriving as a result of Chancellor Angela Merkel's Refugees Welcome announcement, Tempelhof was converted to a temporary housing facility for about 2,000 refugees. The facility housed refugees until early 2019 and continues to offer social services for refugees. These details about Tempelhof illustrate the opportunistic and emergent nature of temporary uses, and they demonstrate that fluidity within the often seemingly static urban environment can exist in various forms. While capital-driven developments, such as plans for Tempelhof to be converted to high-end shopping, or state-ordered programming such as the refugee center, often

dominate, spontaneous community uses sometimes emerge from local residents. These spontaneous uses create conditions within which alternative social-material realities can emerge.

Several European texts published from around 2006 to 2017 analyze the temporary use phenomena and situate it within broader urban planning and design traditions. *Temporary Urban Spaces* (Haydn and Temel 2006) defines temporary use and its agenda as follows:

> Temporary uses are those planned from the outset to be impermanent. We understand the idea of temporality to be determined not, as its literal meaning would suggest, by the duration of use: temporary uses are those that seek to derive unique qualities from the idea of temporality. (Haydn and Temel 2006, 17)

Haydn and Temel discuss the meaning of use in terms of Marx's concepts of use value and exchange value. They argue that a legal relationship is embedded in even the seemingly straightforward idea of utility or function that usually defines use value. For Haydn and Temel, use is also "a legal relationship of disposition and profit, as regulated by the civil code on the basis of private property" (26). These authors track the legal elimination of communal property in Germany beginning in the 19th century, which created the legal basis to displace formerly rural populations and the subsequent large-scale movement to cities. For the majority of the population, "uses" for housing and daily life became largely temporary and dependent on changing employment and uncertain housing tenure, which contributed to a destabilized relationship to place and space for the majority of the population (27–28). Haydn and Temel demonstrate that temporary use is no new phenomenon.

Urban Catalyst: The Power of Temporary Use (Oswalt, Overmeyer, and Misselwitz 2013) and *Urban Pioneers: Temporary Use and Urban Development in Berlin* (Overmeyer 2007) situate temporary urbanism within urban planning and design and urban policy practices. Both texts function as advocacy documents to promote temporary use and development as a recognized type of development within existing political-economic systems. Both argue for the expansion of the realm of possibilities for urban development to include these less programmed, more experimental forms. They also recognize that temporary urbanism is often instrumentalized as a means to catalyze more profitable forms of development.

For example, *Urban Catalyst* (Oswalt, Overmeyer, and Misselwitz 2013) discusses Hamburg Germany's HafenCity development, one of the largest redevelopment projects in Europe. The updated master plan includes a section of land that will be left open for "open-source process involved temporary uses" (373). Clearly, the impetus for the decision was the lack of profit-driven development demand at the moment. The interim temporary uses in this plan were to be closed down when a profitable option emerged. This example demonstrates the perpetual tension between those who advocate the right to the city and those who conceive of land and urban space as yet another object to be purchased and sold. Still, none of these efforts discuss an inherent value in or need to consider land or place itself.

<u>Negotiating the Right to the City</u>

The murder of George Floyd by an on-duty police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota on May 25, 2020 instigated an international response in the form of demonstrations, protests, and riots in city streets from the neighborhood of the murder,

across the United States, and even internationally (*New York Times*, 2021). As a result of months of sustained daily demonstrations, a movement of historic scale has emerged in support of racial and spatial justice. This is one of countless collective events that urbanists Henri Lefebvre (1991) and David Harvey (2013) assert hold the potential for claiming the right to the city. For Lefebvre, the right to the city was an outcry in response to the crisis of everyday life in Paris in the 1960s. Both then and today, urban space is often alienated space—the space of the dispossessed and the space of the growing precariat[6] (Harvey 2013). Such spaces, however, hold the latent possibility of social and material transformation.

Mutual aid and reciprocity can ameliorate the alienation and precarity of the times, which occur on multiple registers. Alienation can occur in a Marxist sense of a worker from the products of their labor. Alienation from place happens on an economic level in terms of capital-driven urban development dividing a city and determining the sort of dwelling in which one can live, but also in terms of the privatization and commodification of urban space in general. On another level, this alienation from place is deeper in the sense that the opportunities to develop relationships with place are limited, as are opportunities to develop relationships with the other humans and entities that make up a place. This is also tied to the alienation from oneself that Lefebvre critiques as a problem of modernity.

The demand—in the 1960s in Paris and now in the United States and Europe—is to create an alternative way of living that, according to Harvey, is "less alienated, more meaningful and playful, but . . . open to becoming, to encounters (both fearful and

[6] Precariat is a term that Harvey claims more appropriately describes contemporary laborers than the proletariat (Harvey 2013).

pleasurable), and to the perpetual pursuits of unknowable novelty" (Harvey 2013, x). These words embody the intent and passionate goals of the everyday urbanisms discussed here.

Harvey (2013) argues that although Lefebvre's work has informed and inspired many, both Lefebvre's ideas and the many urban social movements that demand a right to the city have emerged from the lived experience of people in neighborhoods, on streets, and in the city. According to Harvey, Lefebvre recognized that revolutionary movements are often urban movements, but theorists of the radical left have often poorly conceptualized the city and underestimated the sensibility that comes from activity on the streets themselves. The radical left often dismisses urban social movements as reformist in their efforts to address particular, localized issues, rather than systemic economic-political structures (xiv).

Even before Lefebvre's time, the city itself had been reconfigured according to the dictates of capital in ways that included the blurring of the urban-rural divide, increasing globalization, and large-scale urbanization that recentered economic power outside of Europe; however, Lefebvre recognized the continued importance of making claims to urban space. Harvey (2013) expounds on the importance of claims to the spaces and places of urban life:

> Only when it is understood that those who build and sustain urban life have a primary claim to that which they have produced, and that one of their claims is to the unalienated right to make a city more after their own heart's desire, will we arrive at a politics of the urban that will make sense. "The city may be dead," Lefebvre seems to say, but "long live the city!" (xvi)

In this account, the right to the city redefines the idea of rights from those of individualistic and property-based terms to the idea of the collective (Harvey 2013, 3).

Moments of creative destruction—such as the one in which the spatial and racial justice protests emerged within the broader context of the global COVID-19 pandemic—are important leverage points. Harvey's (2013) manifesto for how to achieve the right to the city recognizes Lefebvre's legacy:

> Focus sharply on those moments . . . where the economy of wealth creation piggy-backs violently on the economy of dispossession, and then proclaim on behalf of the dispossessed their right to the city—their right to change the world, to change life, and to reinvent the city more to their heart's desire . . . Perhaps Lefebvre was right, more than 40 years ago, to insist that the revolution in our times has to be urban—or nothing. (25)

Harvey (2013) and LeFebvre (1991) structure their discussion of the right to the city primarily in terms of material and economic alienation. Although both recognize that alienation from oneself and community is also an issue inherent in modernity, neither emphasize how these dynamics differ across race or gender, nor do they discuss the underlying issues of Indigenous dispossession of land inherent in claims to city space in North America and elsewhere.

The Black Lives Matter movement makes a different sort of demand for the right to the city than other urban political movements, such as the Occupy Wall Street movement that inspired Harvey's (2013) book, *Rebel Cities.* Charles W. Mills (2001) argues that spatial exclusion—alienation from place—is a fundamental aspect of the lives of Black people in the United States. For Mills, race is "the basic organizing spatial

principle of the extended body of the polity" (86). American cities presuppose Black alienation; in this context, spatial exclusion is also racial exclusion.

Furthermore, the right to the city represents yet another sort of settler-colonial appropriation of space and place if not undertaken in close solidarity with efforts to advance Indigenous sovereignties, including land claims. Fears of increasing precarity due to anticipated future catastrophes belie the ongoing conditions of precarity in which many communities have persisted for centuries. Kyle Whyte (2017) resituates the discourses of the Anthropocene that project dystopian scarcity and loss within Indigenous contexts of long-term perseverance:

> In the Anthropocene, then, some indigenous people already inhabit what our ancestors would have likely characterized as a dystopian future. So, we consider the future from what we believe is already a dystopia, as strange as that may sound to some readers. (209)

A movement that asserts the right to the city must include negotiations across uneven differences, including those embedded in racial injustice, spatial exclusion, land dispossession, and economic alienation.

In this dissertation, I focus on projects that instigate intersectional solidarity work. The case studies included here are more planned than the spontaneous uprisings that have been underway since May 2020, but the basic theory of change is the same among the case study projects and the demonstrations for racial justice. My research hypothesis and Harvey's call to action are tested in the streets; it is my hope that by coming together in these temporary moments and activities, new forms of solidarity can emerge.

Inspiring Mutual Aid

Temporary, participatory urbanism often takes the form of mutual aid efforts that assert the right to the city. Mutual aid is a concept, a type of social-political movement, and a basic aspect of human existence that typically includes voluntary activities of collective care through which participants and recipients of assistance work together toward a common purpose. The COVID-19 pandemic has made mutual aid a common term. The failure of governments and other institutions to adequately confront the pandemic has prompted countless mutual aid initiatives, ranging in scope from collecting personal protective equipment for healthcare workers, to temporary housing initiatives, to food delivery networks, to declarations of autonomous neighborhood zones, and beyond.

Mutual aid is not a new phenomenon. Informal commitments and actions to help others have historically been the foundations of society. Contemporary societal structures, however, erode or inhibit the formation of informal networks of care. In this regard, contemporary mutual aid initiatives are often explicit efforts to address issues of alienation and precarity, including oppression and inequality. One recently formed mutual aid initiative, Big Door Brigade, explains,

> Mutual aid is when people get together to meet each other's basic survival needs with a shared understanding that the systems we live under are not going to meet our needs and we can do it together RIGHT NOW! Mutual aid projects are a form of political participation in which people take responsibility for caring for one another and changing political conditions, not just through symbolic acts or putting pressure on their representatives in government, but by actually building new social relations that are more survivable. (Big Door Brigade 2020)

Mutual aid projects are generally self-organized by participants and aid recipients together around a common commitment embodied in the slogan "Solidarity, not charity."

Contemporary mutual aid movements in the United States and Europe take inspiration from the work of Pëtr Alexeyevich Kropotkin. Kropotkin ([1902] 2008) argued that mutual aid within the nonhuman animal kingdom is both a more common and more important factor in evolution than competition. He extended this argument to human societies, condemning the then (and now) dominant notion of competition as the most basic state of human interaction as misleading and inaccurate. For Kropotkin, mutualism is a fundamental part of human experience that extends beyond allegiance only to self, friends, or family. He argues, "It is not love to my neighbor—whom I often do not know at all—which induces me to seize a pail of water and to rush to his house when I see it on fire; it is a far wider, even though more vague feeling or instinct of human solidarity and sociability which moves me" (Kropotkin [1902] 2008, 4). For Kropotkin, solidarity is an innate tendency that forms the foundation of a society. Whereas Darwinism had been adapted by social theorists who advocated a societal paradigm derived from the notion of "survival of the fittest," Kropotkin argued that mutualism is at least as much of the "state of nature" as competition both in humans and nonhuman animals.

Kropotkin's ([1902] 2008) laudable efforts to excavate mutualism from the back corners of evolutionary thought, however, fall victim to the same social Darwinist prejudices he sought to escape. While it is problematic to judge actions of the past against the standards of the present, it is important to note that Kropotkin's logic involves a colonialist, arguably racist perspective of non-European societies, which he categorized

as “primitives” or “savages” throughout *Mutual Aid*. While it is beyond the scope of this text to thoroughly critique Kropotkin’s schema, however brief my genealogy on mutual aid within the Euro-Western context may be, I acknowledge the persistence and pervasiveness of the colonial mindset that viewed tribal cultures as less advanced than European societies. Another concept worth noting—but outside the scope of this present work—is the problem of Kropotkin’s jump from the evolutionary factors in nonhuman animals to human societies.

Kropotkin’s work has exerted a profound influence on social movements and social theory from the early 20th century through the present day. For example, a recent essay (Springer 2020) on COVID-19 is grounded in Kropotkin’s theory; it begins with the assertion that “we are bearing witness to and actively participating in the reconstruction of the unshakable and fundamental basis of all life on this planet: mutual aid (Kropotkin, [1902] 2008)” (Springer 2020, 113). Kropotkin’s influence was also recently recognized in *The New Yorker* in an article cataloguing the explosion of mutual aid efforts in response to the COVID-19 pandemic (Tolentino 2020).

This recent attention demonstrates the lasting influence Kroptokin’s work and the continued relevance of his insights, some of which are especially poignant in light of the ongoing pandemic. Kropotkin recognized that while people self-organize collaboratively in times of plenty, it is during hardship and disaster that mutual aid often flourishes. Mutualism often springs up in response to disaster out of necessity and the most basic human desires to care for one another.

My short time in New Orleans in January 2007 illuminated the necessity and possibility of mutual aid and participatory urbanism as responses to disaster, and this

experience informed how I approached this project. I had started a graduate program in urban planning in 2005, just a few weeks after Hurricane Katrina devastated the Gulf Coast region. In January 2007, I drove with a group of friends and urban planning classmates for a week-long volunteer stint with a now-defunct community group called the Phoenix of New Orleans. We gutted houses that were still empty and rotting from the flood waters that had remained, soaking everything, for weeks after the hurricane. I knew that everything had fallen apart after Katrina, especially in the poorer parts of the city, but as a White, middle-class American from the rural Midwest, I had never witnessed such a collapse firsthand.

We went to the lower ninth ward and stood where the levy had broken, demolishing an entire neighborhood. A year and a half after Katrina hit, the Lower Ninth Ward—and much of New Orleans—still embodied the cruel truth that no one was coming to save the people who lived in those places. At the same time, though, the locals that we met all around the city spoke of the hundreds of volunteer groups that continue to rebuild, one house at a time. I have yet to witness a more profound lived example of the mutual aid commitment, "We take care of us."

One day that week, we traveled from where we were staying in the Tulane-Gravier neighborhood to Common Grounds Wellness Clinic in Algiers, where we spent the afternoon going door-to-door to ensure that residents knew how to sign up for the newly implemented garbage services. This was a mundane task that was nevertheless crucial to getting the neighborhood cleaned up and operating at some sort of normalcy. Common Grounds Clinic is famous for being one of the first mutual aid efforts to consolidate during the chaos following Hurricane Katrina. By the time of my visit in

January 2007, Common Grounds had many programs up and running, as well as a permanent clinic space in a neighborhood commercial building.

The work performed by Common Grounds in the months and years following Hurricane Katrina formed the foundation for what is now the nonprofit organization and social-political movement, Mutual Aid Disaster Relief. In 2020, the Mutual Aid Disaster Network continues to advocate a mutual aid approach to both disaster response and broader community organizing. It is currently active in COVID-19 relief efforts, as well as wildfire relief efforts in the American west. These initiatives grew from a primary commitment of reciprocity. The rallying call continues to be "Solidarity, not charity." The organization's approach is modeled upon Kropotkin's philosophy of solidarity and mutualism (Mutual Aid Disaster Relief 2020). These types of participatory urbanisms demonstrate the potential for self-organizing initiatives to make substantial and long-term impacts on everyday life in cities.

Rebecca Solnit's (2009) account of the mutual aid efforts that formed in New Orleans in response to Katrina enforces Kropotkin's claim that disaster and catastrophe often inspire mutual aid efforts. Solnit emphasizes how what she calls "extraordinary communities" form as a result of catastrophe. Solnit's detailed case studies of the principles of mutualism argued a century earlier by Kropotkin demonstrate that these moments of struggle offer possibilities for transformative acts of solidarity: "Who are you? Who are we? In times of crisis, these are life-and-death questions" (Prelude).

My investigation aligns with Solnit's thesis to focus more specifically on the role of material activities and physical places in how "extraordinary communities" form. I, too, recognize that while the capacity for mutual aid and reciprocity is eroded by the

prevailing forces shaping daily life, in disasters and disruption we are offered a moment in which something can—and must—be otherwise.

My point here is to demonstrate that it is in moments like these—when the existing order of things is suddenly disrupted—that new ways of being necessarily emerge. Very often, the immediate responses are those of collective care. These moments can instigate the emergence of cultures of solidarity.

This dissertation asks how mutual aid and reciprocity can be extended to place and the material world in the built environment in everyday urban practices. The two case studies in this dissertation exemplify the principles of mutual aid. Kitchen on the Run is one of hundreds, if not thousands, of initiatives started in response to the refugee influx in Germany starting in 2015. The Totem Pole Journey first emerged in response to the September 11th attacks to help the children whose parents were killed in the twin towers and has grown over the years. These efforts grew from a primary commitment of reciprocity. The rallying calls continue to be "Solidarity, not charity" and "We take care of us."

Research Design

Cartography and Affirmative Alternatives

This research proceeds with a fourfold approach that extends from research design across methodology, methods, conceptual intervention, and my selection of real-world, case study projects. At each level of the project, I introduce, interrogate, and speculate with North American Indigenous philosophies, posthumanist, new materialist theory, and urban theory and practice. Each of these theoretical fields address the elements that are crucial to the overall goal of the project. I situate my research as a

transversal relay across and through three bodies of theory and two real-world case studies in an effort to illuminate whether and how everyday, material practices support the emergence of cultures of solidarity. These three bodies of theory themselves span various disciplinary traditions, including human geography, Euro-Western and Indigenous philosophy, Indigenous studies, architecture, urban design, and urban planning. Case studies have been examined through detailed ethnographies across several years, which allows for an iterative process of analysis between theory and practice for each project being studied.

This research is framed by two straightforward methodological guides, both of which are adapted from the model Braidotti (2011, 2013) elucidates. These methodological guides are (1) cartography and (2) the development of affirmative alternatives to existing conditions. For Braidotti, cartography draws from Deleuze and Guattari's (1987) method in *A Thousand Plateaus*. Cartography is an analytical process through which one must account for one's position in terms of space (i.e., a geopolitical, social, and eco-philosophical dimension) and time (i.e., a historical and genealogical dimension that includes an analysis of power relations). Braidotti (2013) elaborates on the development of affirmative alternatives in terms of ethics as follows:

> They [posthuman ethics] have to be generated affirmatively and creatively by efforts geared to creating possible futures, by mobilizing resources and visions that have been left untapped and by actualizing them in daily practices of interconnection with others. (191)
>
> The future as an active object of desire propels us forth and motivates us to be active in the here and now of a continuous present that calls for both resistance

> and the counter-actualization of alternatives. The yearning for sustainable futures can construct a livable present. This is not a leap of faith, but an active transposition, a transformation at the in-depth level. (192)

This introductory chapter and Chapter II comprise the cartography of this project. I analyze two case study projects through the cartography that I develop in the first part of the dissertation. I also analyze the case studies in terms of the affirmative alternatives that they offer.

While this model of "critical theory beyond negativity" occupies a distinct niche within social theory by focusing on the development of affirmative alternatives in addition to careful, critical analysis of social conditions, its analogue in urban design and the practices of creating the built environment is simply standard practice. Urban design and building are the acts of creating affirmative alternatives. Social theory could benefit from work with design fields, which dwell within the affirmative. Here, I connect these two worlds by arguing that the affirmative spatial-material-social alternatives created through everyday urban practices produce affirmative conceptual alternatives.

Research Questions

This dissertation is guided by the following research questions:

1. How do participatory, informal, temporary, urbanisms influence the emergence of communities of solidarity, particularly in situations of disruption and indeterminacy?
    a. What is the role of the design intervention's material artifacts in these activities?

b. How does human connection to a place—a sense of place—develop through these
activities, particularly in situations of disruption and indeterminacy?
c. How are ongoing, North American settler-colonial and European colonial legacies of displacement and erasure negotiated in these activities?

2. How do Indigenous philosophies and new materialist, post-humanist theories inform the development of urban design and planning principles that foreground the importance of urban place as a site of and participant in the creation of relational, ethical approaches to contemporary environmental-social challenges?

Case Study Introductions

I have selected two case studies based on their connections between participatory, informal, urban practices, new materialist and Indigenous theoretical perspectives, and various situations of displacement, disruption, indeterminacy, and precarity. These cases demonstrate ways in which both theorists and participants are developing new urban concepts and practices through relays between theory and practice. They also illuminate the ways in which North American Indigenous-settler-migrant and migrant-European communities are working together in and through place with the aims of addressing commonly held environmental concerns and building communities of solidarity. Each project focuses on the role of a design artifact and engagement in and with the urban environment. Importantly, these projects focus on what can be accomplished through temporary urban design interventions in the built environment.

The Totem Pole Journey

The first case study focuses on "The Totem Pole Journey," an ongoing project of the Lummi Nation House of Tears Carvers. As introduced at the beginning of this chapter, the Totem Pole Journey campaigns began in 2002, when master carver Jewell James was inspired to carve a totem pole and bring it across the continent to New York, where it was gifted in a healing ceremony for the children of people who were killed in the September 11th attacks. The totem pole now stands at Sterling Forest State Park northwest of the city. Since then, the House of Tears Carvers have led more than a dozen journeys back and forth across the continent, with newly carved poles featured in each journey. I first learned of the project in 2014, and I first participated in project events in 2017. In 2019, I volunteered as participant-researcher in a tour focused on liberating a captive orca whale, Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut, and protecting the Salish Sea.

During the 2019 current Totem Pole Journey, the carvers brought people together in a campaign for orca whales and the Salish Sea by holding events in urban spaces focused on the totem pole. This campaign illustrates ways that people of the Lummi Nation advocate *spiritual sovereignty* and an Indigenous approach to protecting orca whales in the Salish Sea by asserting tribal sovereignty and instigating solidarity across settler and tribal communities through public events in towns and cities. The Journey also brings the Indigenous concept of *sacred obligation* to the everyday urban environment. The events bring together Indigenous peoples of various regions with urban residents from multiple backgrounds. They also introduce Lummi concepts of sacred obligation, sacred space, and spiritual sovereignty to those who participate by not just talking about, but enacting these concepts. The totem pole is a design artifact through which this

enactment is done and along with which the project leaders create a sacred space during the event.

Key to this project is the intervention of the totem pole into public, urban—that is, colonized—spaces and the journey of the totem pole through many Indigenous territories. The pole is used to draw people together in a variety of ceremonies. Many of these ceremonies seek explicitly to draw Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples together through spiritual practices of various faiths. Participants are asked to gather around the totem pole and lay their hands on the pole and each other in order to send prayers and well wishes into the pole. This project provides an opportunity to analyze the roles of material design artifacts and temporary interventions in public urban space in the formation of communities of solidarity with a crucial focus on Indigenous conceptions of sovereignty, spirituality, place, solidarity, and the agency of materiality.

Kitchen on the Run

The second case study for the project is the "Kitchen on the Run," an initiative of a German nongovernmental organization called Über den Tellerrand (ÜdT) that I introduced at the start of this chapter. The Kitchen on the Run was launched in 2016 in response to the increasing numbers of refugees and migrants arriving in Germany. The project supports refugee and local resident community-building through group cooking events held outdoors in public, urban squares in and around a shipping container that has been outfitted as a mobile kitchen. ÜdT develops ongoing programming from the kitchen events and has fostered a satellite network of projects in more than thirty-five German cities. In 2019, I conducted interviews, attended cooking events, and volunteered as a participant in the project in the town of Rendsburg, a mid-sized town in northern

Germany. There, I studied the beginnings of a community that continues to develop even after the departure of the shipping container kitchen.

The Kitchen on the Run is inspired by theories of temporary urbanism. The idea for a mobile shipping container kitchen was developed by two urban planning graduate students in 2013 in Berlin as a concept, but it was brought to life in response to the arrival of more than a million migrants and refugees to Germany in 2015 and 2016. The project embodies the theory that an informal, temporary intervention in public urban space can serve to bring people together in unique ways.

Two aspects of the materiality of the project are important to my study. First, as a design intervention, the shipping container illustrates principles of indeterminacy, adaptability, and interaction. The container was designed to be a mobile, transitory unit for global trade. It has since been repurposed into another sort of mobile typology, and its current design is highly adaptable. Along with the shipping container goes a portable wooden porch. The shipping container doors can close around the porch to create three protected sides when weather requires, or they can be opened entirely so that the porch is open on three sides, with the open kitchen connected on the fourth side. The benches and tables of the Kitchen are foldable, and they can be moved out into the public square or arranged on the porch for seating and food preparation in many different arrangements. By design, event participants interact with all aspects of the Kitchen, including setting up tables, cooking, and washing dishes. Event organizers make clear that participants should make use of the Kitchen as if it were their own. All Kitchen activities are easily visible to nonparticipants in the larger public square. The Kitchen is an intervention in urban public space that calls out to passersby.

In addition to the container and associated components, the materiality of grocery shopping, food preparation, and shared meals is essential to the project. The project designers believe that cooking together brings people together across cultural, religious, language, and gender barriers. Both the container and the cooking practices offer ideal conditions to test my hypotheses about the importance of place and materiality in the formation of communities of solidarity.

The Kitchen on the Run sets a stage for unexpected encounters. All the activities take place in public view; thus, every event includes an aspect of performativity and surprise and a chance for someone just passing by to interact. The proposition of the project is that the kitchen provides a neutral space at which refugees, migrants, and longer-term residents can get to know each other as equals, rather than through charity efforts. In such a space, everyone contributes, and spontaneity and emergence are encouraged by the project design, its placement, and the programming coordinated by the staff.

Plan of the Following Chapters

This dissertation proceeds with four chapters following this one. In Chapter II, I continue to develop the cartographic and figurative transversal theoretical methodologies introduced in this chapter. I also detail my auto, material ethnographical approach. I analyze recent scholarship that seeks to create bridges between Indigenous and posthumanist thought, and I engage the critique of extractive use of Indigenous thought within some contemporary posthumanist scholarship within the Euro-Western tradition.

While each case study was approached with specific methods tailored to the nature of each project, my overarching empirical methodology applies to both. This

methodology includes emphasis on researcher positionality and participation, attention to the affective dimensions of the projects, focus on the material and other more-than-human elements of the projects, special attention to soundscape studies and nonverbal elements of human interactions, and a commitment to reciprocity in research. In this case, reciprocity means that although this research was designed and executed to meet my own ends of achieving a doctoral degree, I committed to contributing to each of the projects that I engaged.

Chapters III and IV consist of an analysis of each project. Chapters III and IV include details of the specific empirical methods that I used for each case study. The primary goal of each chapter is to track how the material activities in each project influence the way in which alliances form and solidarity is enacted.

In Chapter V, I present suggestions for how the thematic findings from the case studies might inform Indigenous and posthumanist, new materialist theories, as well as urban design and planning practice and theory.

CHAPTER II. METHODOLOGIES

Introduction

In this chapter, I continue the transversal analysis of North American Indigenous philosophies, posthumanist, new materialist theory, and urban theory and practice that I introduced in Chapter I in terms of the methodological commitments relevant for this project. As introduced in Chapter I, this research proceeds with a fourfold approach that extends from the two methodological guides introduced in Chapter I—(1) cartography and (2) the development of affirmative alternatives to existing conditions. These guides are not so much overarching principles as they are the matrix upon which the other methodologies are built. Each element of the methodology includes both a critical analysis of the geo-social-political conditions of the study (cartography) and a move toward affirmative alternatives. My methodologies include the following commitments:

1. a transversal, auto, material ethnography of participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms;
2. respectful engagement with Indigenous research protocols and methodologies; and
3. an emphasis on materiality and place through exploration of the urban design elements and artifacts and of the projects.

In the following sections, I provide additional detail on these commitments.

An Auto, Material Ethnography of Participatory, Informal, Temporary Urbanisms

If the truth about stories is, as Native American author and scholar Thomas King (2008) says, that they are all we are, then stories are powerful things. They work on individuals and cultures. Stories come from both human and nonhuman worlds, and they

have the power to affect both humans and nonhumans. While these claims may be obvious, what may not be as apparent to those who identify with the dominant stories of their world is that the stories that get told can keep other stories from being heard. A story of domination produces a world in which nondominant ways of being are disregarded or subjugated. Donna Haraway (2016) argues, "it matters which stories tell stories" (39). Thomas King (2008) illustrates this point by way of two creation stories—The Woman Who Fell Through the Sky and Genesis. These stories inform how those who learn them behave in and relate with the world. King argues that the Genesis story, that of the dominant culture here in North America, produces an attitude of "Masters of the Universe" (28). The story of The Woman who Fell Through the Sky would have created—and did create—a different sort of world.

I agree with Thomas King (2008) and Donna Haraway (2016). It matters how I tell this story of solidarity and mutual aid and temporary urbanism because who and what tells the story changes the potential of these activities. Temporary urbanism makes a different sort of world depending on who and what are making the story. The methodology I use comes from pluriversal perspectives because the story I am trying to tell is a story of how solidarity forms across the pluriverse that includes humans and nonhumans, as well as places.

Therefore, I have developed a methodology that I call an auto, material ethnography to guide the process. As an ethnography, I follow Sarah Pink's (2009) emphasis on the sensory aspects of experience and her approach to ethnography that distinguishes itself from others that advance of detached sort of observational positioning. Instead, Pink conceives of ethnography as a "critical methodology" in which

"ethnography is a reflexive and experiential process through which understanding, knowing and (academic) knowledge are produced" (5). Pink's approach is especially important for my project because it explicitly seeks ways to account for nonspoken, nonverbal activities that cannot be accessed by observations or interviews.

Material Ethnography

Material is important in my approach because the story is not just about humans (which would not be possible in any case), but because ethnography seems generally to try to emphasize what humans are doing over human relationships and interrelatedness with nonhumans. My project analyzes the interrelationships between the everyday built environment, material design artifacts, humans, and nonhuman living beings. Urban design, landscape architecture, and urban planning tend to assume a Euro-Western attitude toward the nonhuman world that presumes nonbiotic entities to be mere objects and nonhuman living creatures to be somehow categorically separate from humans. I interrogate these assumptions throughout this project, including in the way they formulate research methods.

I situate this as a material ethnography to emphasize that the research includes humans and nonhumans, including places, and that humans are only one of the sorts of entities that tell stories. Through this approach, I begin an account for the agential capacities of the nonhuman world. To this end, I orient my study of the nonhuman parts of the world as an ethnography. This is a study of the behaviors and the relationships among human and more-than-human entities.

Auto Ethnography

While I make every effort to foreground the role of the more-than-human world, as the researcher conceiving and carrying out this project, my role is by necessity that of a mediator and an arbiter of this story (Kaufmann 2020). In part, the *auto* I have included in my ethnography is simply an attempt to be honest in my research in recognition that, as Kaufmann (2020) states, "there has always been a portion of the self in ethnography," although this condition was historically denied in positivistic circles (400).

In this case specifically, I am too attached to this research topic not to be involved in it, even if I wished to attempt to observe from a distance. I am in the thick of it, and I am opposed in principle to notions of objectivity that ignore situatedness. My perspective aligns with Haraway (1988), who made clear some time ago the inadequacies of claims made for universal objectivity and argued that "only partial perspective promises objective vision" (583). Subjectivity is situated and contingent; therefore, knowledge production processes must also recognize that they are contextual and partial.

Beyond issues of my positionality is the argument I am making about the instigation of solidarity and mutual aid. Manifestos, policies, and discourses can be subjected to any number of analyses, but in this project, I am tracking the moments of emergence of mutual aid and solidarity through material acts in everyday spaces. I am focused on the moments before slogans and policies—on the moments of emergence. My own experience in these moments constitutes important data that can be analyzed along with the actions and words of other people involved and the material design artifacts and places of the projects. Therefore, there is an auto in this ethnography. More formally speaking, Adams, Ellis, and Jones (2017) define auto ethnography as follows:

> Autoethnography is a research method that uses personal experience ("auto") to describe and interpret ("graphy") cultural texts, experiences, beliefs, and practices ("ethno"). Auto ethnographers believe that personal experience is infused with political/cultural norms and expectations, and they engage in rigorous self-reflection—typically referred to as "reflexivity"—in order to identify and interrogate the intersections between the self and social life. Fundamentally, autoethnographers aim to show "people in the process of figuring out what to do, how to live, and the meaning of their struggles." (1)

In contrast, Kaufmann (2020) focuses more explicitly on auto ethnography as a story of the self in culture that can be told through a variety of techniques represented generally by the categories of evocative, analytic, and performative (400). An analytic approach to auto ethnography uses theory to analyze personal experience with social phenomena (e.g., racism), rather than solely personal narrative or artistic expression. My approach is analytic, but it is not quite a perfect match with that of Kaufmann or Adams, Ellis, and Jones. Rather than my personal experience as an object of study, I add my personal experience in the mix as part of the transversal relay I am doing across theory and everyday phenomena. In doing this research, I am doing a transversal, auto, material ethnography with an analytic emphasis.

I am suspicious, however, of too much reification of the self or Self, so I want to use the concept loosely. A self, a body, an I—Braidotti calls these things an excuse to go shopping and a pretext for a passport. Personally, I am more comfortable with Braidotti's (2011, 2013) notions of nomadic subjectivity than any sort of transcendent I. This might put me at odds with the other figures that I wish to meet here. But my other point, that

incommensurability has its virtues, makes a case for taking a stand in terms of my own subjectivity as something prone to disassembly and reassembly.

I will proceed with a claim to some sort of an I—for now. This is partly because I realize that, however contingent, there is real weight behind this agglomeration of experiences that constitutes me. In *The Truth About Stories*, King (2008) confides in the reader about the hold his personal life stories have on him:

> I tell the stories not to play on your sympathies but to suggest how stories can control our lives, for there is a part of me that has never been able to move past these stories, a part of me that will be chained to these stories as long as I live. (9)

Similarly, as I discuss in the following pages, my experiences with temporary, informal urbanisms are always present in this research. There is no observation outside of these experiences; there are, though, always observations and these experiences.

While Jodi Kaufmann (2012) focuses less on how her stories are her and more on what her stories do in her essay, "I Spit to Meet You on a Line Unfolding," she, too, is marked by her stories. They are in her body (16). Kaufmann knows that her stories act powerfully on her and in her. She knows that they have powers to affect others, which she demonstrates by sharing one reaction to a story she told: "How dare you! How dare you tell me that story? You had no right to tell me that story without warning me" (16). King (2008) affirms the danger of stories by sharing the lesson that Leslie Marmon Silko (2016) offers in her own tale of how evil came into the world through a story told by a witch. The lesson warns that stories are dangerous: "For once a story is told, it cannot be called back. Once told, it is loose in the world. So, you have to be careful with the stories you tell. And you have to watch out for the stories that you are told" (Silko 2016 qtd. in

King 2008, 10). As a researcher, I realize that I must be careful how I write this story. This carefulness is an important part of my methodology.

Transversal Analysis

My auto, material ethnography is part of and supports the transversal theoretical analysis I undertake throughout the dissertation. I use the term *transversal* in the Braidottian (2019), Deleuze-Guattarian (1987) inspired sense of transversal as in-between and across categories, including those of nature/culture, human/nonhuman, and traditional academic disciplinary boundaries. I am conducting a transversal analysis across and through various bodies of theory, including posthumanist, new materialist philosophies within the Euro-Western tradition, North American Indigenous philosophies of place, and urbanist theory and practice. The auto, material ethnography that I use here builds the path through these conceptual and material fields. While the goal is to develop a pluriversal approach to solidarity in the everyday built environment, I recognize that this transversal meta-methodology is itself weighted toward a posthumanist orientation.

This transversal theoretical analysis and my material, auto, ethnographical methodologies work together and inform one another. Again, my point is to track the entwinements and barricades of thought, place, and actions, so empirics and theory go hand in hand. This transversal approach is taken in contrast to a methodology in which one applies a framework or theory to an empirical situation. It is also in contrast to a grounded theory approach that "truth tests" a theoretical framework via empirical study. The Kitchen on the Run and the Totem Pole Journey, two real-world projects, both ground and direct the flow of the transversal analysis and auto, material ethnography.

Returning to the truth about stories (King 2008), I recognize that the theories, activities, and stories with which I am engaging may be irrevocably at odds with each other. Much is at stake in these differences in terms of identity and the very possibility of survival, not to mention the possibility for resilience, sustainability, or flourishing. Jodi Kaufman (2012) cautions—and I agree—that my inclusion of the auto in this material ethnography weights the story I am making in a particular direction—different sorts of dangers are at stake for me than another kind of researcher. Being less explicit about my own experience in the project, however, would not alter the condition that the research is situated in relation to me personally.

Kaufmann (2012) recognizes these perils. She knows that her own stories are powerful actors on herself and others. She knows that they have made her; they *are* her. She writes that her stories fold her. As she says, they keep her from meeting you and me. And yet, they keep her together. One danger for Kaufmann in unfolding the stories is that in doing so she knows she may no longer know what she is:

> But I wonder about what I will be without my stories. A vibrational line without identity? A breath without hate? Without my stories will I become a body without organs (Deleuze, 1980/1987)? Will I emerge with the capacity to meet the other face to face (Caputo, 1993)? Will my need for repetitive performance (Butler, 1990) dissipate? Or is my body without stories a dream deferred, and will I dry-up like a raisin in the sun (Hughes, 1996)? (2011, 19)

In this danger is also the liberatory potential of stories. They can make us something else, and we can make them something else.

If the truth about stories is, as Thomas King (2008) writes, that they are all we are, then we can change our individual and collective selves by changing the stories we tell about ourselves and each other. Kaufmann (2012) "spits to meet me" with her stories:

> . . . I savor and spit stories so that I may emerge the capacity to meet you. Building a world to come . . . may become not through me understanding you, examining you, sorting you, helping you, but through emerging the capacity in met to meet you face to face . . . in order that together we may become on a line unfolding. (16)

The auto in this auto, material ethnography is not just for my sake, although it would be untrue to say it is not about me, too. Rather, the auto is a recognition that my story influences how the story beyond me is told.

Research Ethics—What is at Stake in a Transversal Analysis of North American, Indigenous Philosophies and Euro-Western, Posthumanist Theory

The auto in the ethnography involves my ethical commitments. They direct the research approach, so I must be explicit about them. My methodology includes a commitment to what Alice Walker (1997) beautifully described as the "building of an edifice of hope" (xxiii). The project is driven by my experiences of the past nineteen or so years that have demonstrated that temporary urbanisms can evoke acts of mutual aid and cultivate cultures of solidarity. I have seen these things in action, and I have helped to make them happen. Therefore, there is an agenda to my research to show a possibility for solidarity. Through this research, my aim is to show how temporary urbanisms work and what sort of flourishing they might instigate. I am personally committed to this project and to the building of a world where stories of mutual aid tell stories of mutual aid.

Alice Walker (1997) recognized that this building work is not easy. It includes recognizing faults we all possess. As she noted, the contributions we make—what she called "the stones that we bring" (xxv) are not perfect, but the flaws themselves can bring us together across our differences. Recognizing the harm that we inflict—which includes recognizing our faults—is an essential part of repairing legacies of oppression and environmental destruction. My story, my stone, is part of this building.

Kaufmann (2012), too, argues for the necessity of being forthcoming with one's own position, and Kaufmann is understandably apprehensive about what might happen should she loosen her hold on her stories—it has not gone well when she has done so in the past. She feels she must, however, for her own sake and for mine—and for yours, too. She says, "To become a humanity I must chew the pebbles in my mouth, unwrap the tales in my tissue, and spit them onto the earth so they can be transformed to loam. I spit to meet you on a line unfolding" (19). Kaufmann, full of trepidation, spits her stories out to meet me on a line unfolding. She acts—she spits—to undo her own identity, ego, self, to join her subjectivity with mine, and to make something else together. Fearful and painful though it is, Kaufmann chooses to act. By so doing, she is able to meet me and to make something new together.

What is at stake in unfolding subjectivities? For me, the point is to find alliances in service to Earth flourishing that respect the interrelatedness of all entities. The Enlightenment distinctions of human and other disallow the solidarity necessary for Earthly survival. This disallowal negates the creative, joyful, spontaneous possibilities of the pluriverse. Therefore, I am interested in other sorts of accounts of co-production of subjectivities and places.

One must surely choose this process of reconfiguring what it means to be a human and what it means to be a person. There are words for forceful subjugation and annihilation of human subjectivity: patriarchy, rape, slavery, genocide. But what about the story that dominates this world right now—the one that takes away even the idea that stories are also told by the entirety of nonhuman creation? Is this an ecocide? I think it is something even worse than ecocide. It is certainly erasure.

Thomas King (2008) says that stories are all that we are; if this is true, then taking away others' stories is lethal. Nomadic, nonunitary, and unfolding approaches to subjectivity are attempts at undoing the center from the center (Braidotti 2014) with the goal of creating more sustainable, ethical, and just ways of living. These efforts, however, are often located within what Vanessa Watts (2017) describes as an epistemological-ontological (i.e., Euro-Western) frame (21). For instance, posthumanist attempts to reconstitute the human are criticized for falling back on a latent European Enlightenment idea of humanism that lacks an adequate account of humans as relational outcomes and extensions of the world itself.

Through a critique of Stacy Alaimo's (2008) discussion of how "dirt demonstrates an agency without agents" (as quoted in Watts 2017, 28), Watts illustrates how a hierarchical conception of human and nonhuman remains embedded in attempts to expand accounts of subjectivity to include the more-than-human. According to Alaimo, dirt should not be conceived on the same register as a family member, but it is more than mere stuff. For Watts, Alaimo's sense of dirt re-inscribes a hierarchical relationship between humans and the rest of the Earth that post humanists seek to rectify.

Watts (2017) and Thomas King (2008) are in alignment in terms of their emphasis on how stories constitute us. The creation stories of Sky Woman (King calls her Charm in his version of the story) are not abstractions, metaphors, or "lore, myth or legend . . . This is what happened" (21). Watts asserts that these stories are what the Haudenosaunee and Anishnaabe people are (and this is not necessarily what all Indigenous people are). Sky Woman (Charm) fell through a hole in the sky and, with the help of many creatures, including Turtle, formed the Earth and the humans who are extensions of it. Humanness, therefore, is inseparable from place and the rest of the inhabitants of the Earth:

> [The stories of Sky Woman] describe a theoretical understanding of the world via a physical embodiment – Place-Thought. Place-Thought is the non-distinctive space where place and thought were never separated because they never could or can be separated. Place-Thought is based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and that humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts. (21)

Watts contrasts this embedded and relational cosmology with a Euro-Western perspective that divides epistemology (i.e., how knowledge is acquired/what is/can be known) from ontology (i.e., what the world is/is made of/how the world is made). The Indigenous cosmologies that Watts presents do not isolate or abstract subjectivities from their embedded and relational contexts. Such an effort would be nonsensical—in these accounts, subjectivity is an extension of place. A self *is* because of its relationship to place and others.

In contrast, posthumanist and new materialist notions of nonunitary subjectivity tend to argue on behalf of subjugated subject positions from anti-essentialist perspectives.

Watts (2013) critiques science studies and ecofeminism along these lines. While Watts recognizes the important work that Haraway's (1988) "Situated Knowledges" does to decenter how knowledge—including ideas of subjectivity—is produced. Watts critiques Haraway for perpetuating the Eurocentric mindset that dismisses Indigenous cosmologies in which the Earth is mother as merely stories.

In addition to Watts (2017), a growing body of literature critiques the colonial mindset running through posthumanisms. Tiffany Lethabo King (2017) argues that nonrepresentational, poststructuralist, and affect theories support a logic of genocide, violence, and colonialism. For King (2017), DG's (1987) ethical call to "make a rhizome" constitutes a "logic and mode of conquistador thought" (171) that "require[s] Indigenous genocide" (174). King criticizes posthumanisms that generally draw from white, Euro-Western traditions for a their lack of awareness of other subject positions: "how perverse and reprehensible to ask Indigenous and Black people who cannot seem to escape death to move beyond the human or the desire to be human. In fact, Black and Indigenous people have never been fully folded into the category of the human" (167). Rather than leaping to recover what can be done with DG (1987) and other poststructuralist influences on contemporary posthuman theory, King points to Jodi Byrd's (2011) approach, which requires readers to pause and absorb the implications of what it means that "following Deleuze and Guattari will end in genocide" (172). The implications are clear for King, who argues that scholars must "make a choice to stay put or move forward with the dismissive, whimsical, white conceit that tolerates Native death" (172). This call to slow down is important. Methodologically, I am going to "stay

with the trouble" (Haraway 2016) and consider this "point of impasse" (King 2017, 172) throughout the dissertation.

Tiffany Lethabo King (2017) argues for Native feminist refusal and Black feminist abolitionist skepticism to intervene in the sometimes oblivious ways in which posthumanist and other Euro-Western theories neglect the implications of annihilation of the self for Black and Native/Indigenous peoples. King demands recognition of the negation through which the category of the human has been produced and the corresponding impact that annihilation of the human subject has on Black and Native/Indigenous people. She writes, "the crafting of the human is a process of relations, specifically, the relations of negation" (179). King argues that a relational process is also required to move "beyond the violence of the human" (179). Refusal and skepticism are two methods for provoking Euro-Western theory to recognize that its efforts to annihilate the human perpetuate the very violence embedded in the category of the human that Euro-Western theory purports to dismantle. King proposes that theorists might more productively focus instead on how Black and Native people continue to resist *exclusion* from the category of human.

I introduce King's (2017) work here to illustrate what is at stake in a transversal analysis of Indigenous and Euro-Western posthumanist theory as it relates to the co-production of subjectivity and space. King illuminates some potential incommensurability and irreconcilability at the heart of this effort. My methodology is not an attempt to reconcile these differences. Rather, my goal is to track how theory and practice can navigate these differences in solidarity. King and Watts (2017) are joined by numerous authors (Bignall and Rigney 2019; Byrd 2011; Hinton, Mehrabi, and Barla

2015; De Line 2016; Larsen and Johnson 2016; Niccolini and Ringrose 2019; Panelli 2010; Sundberg 2014; Tuck and Yang 2012) who engage with the issues of the colonial mindset or colonial meta-narrative that runs through posthumanism.

Braidotti (2013) offers a response in her account of critical posthumanism (40). Braidotti traces her theoretical roots to Franz Fanon and his teacher Aimee Cesaire (46) and posits her approach as a situated cosmopolitan posthumanism that is supported both by the European tradition and non-Western sources (47). In a discussion of the critique, posed by race theorists and feminists, that a destabilized subject position only perpetuates marginalization and oppression, Braidotti points to the work of scholars such as Edward Said and Paul Gilroy. Gilroy, according to Braidotti, considers both colonialism and fascism to be betrayals of European Enlightenment ideals, and, to counter the hegemony of the nation-state, Gilroy develops an approach of affirmative politics of transversal movements. Transversal movements such as anti-slavery, feminism, medicine without borders, etc. operate across and between nation-states—and in so doing, disrupt the fascistic and colonial powers of the state (47).

Braidotti's (2013) posthuman sensibilities appeal to me, and I relate to Kaufmann's (2020) auto ethnographical approaches. I feel both the apprehension and the seduction of spitting out stories, the urge to unfold, to become DG's body without organs, to meet "the roar on the other side of silence" (George Elliot, qtd. Rosi Braidotti 2013, 55). I would quite like to disengage from several of the categories that are constructing this/my self. Some of the trouble that I want to redo or undo is like that of others in subjugated positions. Patriarchy, classism, sexism, homophobia, ableism, heteronormativity, species-isms and so on. I want out and away from these. Personally, I

feel a fearful glee in dismantling so many components that form this self that has been built by patriarchy, capitalism, and a world full of violence. I recognize that I experience these desires in the context of inhabiting a white, cis-gender, female, straight-passing, able-passing American body that has been educated in academe in the 21st century. Tiffany Lethabo King (2017) does not encourage my sort of behavior, but she provides a potential out when she writes that "self-annihilation is something white people need to figure out by themselves. In other words, 'they can have that'" (167).

Returning to the auto part of the ethnography, in which I analyze cultural phenomena through my personal experience, I recognize the perils of self-indulgence. However, while some may say that these personal concerns should get worked out in therapy or at least elsewhere, following the recommendations of Jeff Rose (2020), I proceed with the conviction that self-analysis can help to illuminate particular ways in which a colonial mindset impacts solidarity work. Rose (2020) explains, "Self-exploration enables social justice researchers to see the myriad ways in which we, ourselves, are also often implicated in the systems of injustice that we critique" (17).

As I self-analyze, I reflect on how it might be just another act of colonialism and subjugation to suggest that anyone else unfold or dismantle the very things they have struggled to hold back from annihilation. There is no ethical basis from which to demand social-political-environmental strategies that require a gleeful dismantling of the self. There is no solidarity in demanding a nonunitary subjectivity. Solidarity, as I understand it, must be done through and with incommensurability and irreconcilability. I am my own specimen to track change through encounter. King's (2017) methods of skepticism and refusal are potent antidotes to the threats of arrogant or oblivious whimsy.

This tension I have outlined between concepts of subjectivity is at the heart of the tension between Indigenous theorists and posthumanist, new materialist theorists. In my opinion, contemporary solidarity might include celebrating the new stories that can be let loose on the world from these very tensions. There could be stories about how we do that do not deride stories about what we are (or, as Braidotti (2016) frames it, what we will have been).

If the truth about stories is, as Thomas King (2008) writes, that they are all we are, then something must change if we are to make something else. We can write new stories that do not require the incommensurable parts to be reconciled. There never will—nor need there ever—be commensurability in the stories that make us who we are or how we are becoming. Incommensurability can be a powerful part of solidarity.

Respectful Engagement with Indigenous Research Protocols and Methodologies

<u>Anti-Colonial Methodologies—De-Privileging and De-Centering Euro-Western Knowledge Systems in an Account of the Role of the More-Than-Human World in Instigating Communities of Solidarity</u>

My project attempts an account of the role of nonhuman entities, including places, in instigating communities of solidarity and acts of mutual aid. Dominant Euro-Western social theory is ill-equipped to address this topic. Denzin and Lincoln (2008) concur that "there is a pressing need to decolonize and deconstruct those structures within the Western academy that privilege Western knowledge systems and their epistemologies" (11). In contrast to dominant Euro-Western knowledge systems, alternative Euro-Western traditions, and Indigenous knowledge systems—in very different ways—include diverse, vast, and deep cultural histories of relational existence with the more-than-human world.

Some Indigenous scholars and activists offer to share these perspectives with non-Indigenous people in service to creating sustainable and resilient ways of living. Kimmerer (2013, 2017), Deloria ([1979] 2012), Atleo (2011), King (2008), De Line (2016), and Kovach (2009) are among those who suggest that Indigenous perspectives might serve to inform and inspire people from various cultures, under certain conditions. These scholars also offer that the intersection of Indigenous and Euro-Western perspectives may yield productive, anti-colonial theories. Undoubtedly, there are many Indigenous scholars who are focused more on Indigenous resurgence than cross-cultural alliances.

I follow Denzin and Lincoln's (2008) hopes and cautions that there is a possibility for anti-oppressive collaboration across knowledge systems:

> As nonindigenous scholars seeking a dialogue with indigenous scholars, we (Denzin and Lincoln) must construct stories that are embedded in the landscapes through which we travel. These will be dialogical counternarratives, stories of resistance, of struggle, of hope, stories that create spaces for multicultural conversations, stories embedded in the critical democratic imagination. (12)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith ([1999] 2012) that these kinds of dialogues require researchers—whether they are inside or outside of the community being researched—to live with the consequences of their actions. There is no neutral space from which one can perform anti-colonial research.

Since the publication of Linda Tuhiwai Smith's ([1999] 2012) *Decolonizing Methodologies,* research methodologies by and for Indigenous scholars have proliferated (Archibald 2008; Archibald and Parent 2019; Kovach 2009; Smith 2019; Wilson 2008).

Indigenous methodologies include overall orientations to research and specific methods that differ markedly from the types of social science studies that have until recently been the norm within academic contexts. These methodologies focus on ethical ways of doing research about and with Indigenous peoples. They also situate research in various areas of inquiry within Indigenous epistemologies, ontologies, and ethical systems. The rapidly growing field of Indigenous research methodologies also offers tools and guidance for non-Indigenous researchers.

My research engages with Indigenous research methodologies in several ways. First, I adhere to the basic principle that not all knowledge is available for everyone (Deloria and Wildcat 2001, 65). Knowledge should be shared and received when offered, not extracted or appropriated. Second, I follow the guidelines provided for respectful engagement in research with Indigenous people (Antunes et al. 2018). Third, in addition to respectful engagement with Indigenous people, I practice respectful engagement with Indigenous ethical, epistemological, and ontological systems. I adopt Indigenous research methodologies only when these methods have been offered for use by non-Indigenous researchers. Lastly, I work at the intersection of Indigenous and non-Indigenous research methodologies that strive to develop pluriversal approaches to scholarship and practice.

My dissertation research is both a study of activities—Indigenous and otherwise—and a study of Indigenous and non-Indigenous theories. For instance, I am studying how members of the Lummi Nation and their many tribal and nontribal allies interact in the specific case of the Totem Pole Journey. I am also studying how Indigenous and non-Indigenous concepts such as subjectivity, nonhuman agency, and relationality work in various contexts. The concepts cannot be separated from their

contexts, but there is a "human subjects" component to this project. Therefore, my research requires a protocol for respectful engagement with the Indigenous and non-Indigenous human participants in the project. I must also find ways to engage respectfully with concepts, ethical systems, epistemologies, and ontologies that come from cultural traditions with which I do not personally identify. One of the ways that I achieve this is by focusing on the points of interaction between peoples and theories; the case studies and "human subjects" of the project are efforts to create connections across differences. I do not enter private cultural spaces with this work.

Margaret Kovach's (2009) *Indigenous Methodologies* draws from Kovach's doctoral dissertation work that sought to understand how Indigenous researchers include their cultures in their research methodologies. Kovach also recognizes the many non-Indigenous people who are, as she puts it, "seeking ways to understand the world without harming it" (11). While the book is offered primarily to Indigenous researchers, Kovach also extends its insights to non-Indigenous people who are working to transform academic research, as well as policies and practices beyond academia. She writes,

> There is a desire among a growing community of non-Indigenous academics to move beyond the binaries found within Indigenous-settler relations to construct new, mutual forms of dialogue, research, theory, and action. As long as the academy mirrors a homogeneous reflection of bodies, minds, and methods, our move in this direction is stalled. The infusion of Indigenous knowledge systems and research frameworks informed by the distinctiveness of cultural epistemologies transforms homogeneity. It not only provides another environment where Indigenous knowledges can live, but changes the nature of the academy

itself. Indigenous methodologies disrupt methodological homogeneity in research. (Kovach 2009, 12)

There are ethical responsibilities associated with engaging as an ally in shaping new forms of research. One of these is respecting Indigenous methodologies on their own terms, rather than attempting to translate or sidestep aspects that do not fit within the confines of non-Indigenous norms. The responsibilities to ethical engagement discussed by Kovach are also reflected in the following Indigenous Research Protocol (Antunes et al. 2018).

An Indigenous Research Protocol

I have adopted the guidelines set by the authors of *The Honourable Harvest: An Indigenous Research Protocol* (Antunes et al. 2018). These authors were inspired by the work of Dr. Robin Wall Kimmerer (2015), for whom the honorable harvest is “a set of protocols that governs our taking, so that the world remains as rich for the seventh generation to come as it is for us today” (Kimmerer 2013, cited in Antunes et al. 2018, 3). This Indigenous Research Protocol begins with the commitment to consider the “Four R’s” of Indigenous research: respect, relevance reciprocity, and responsibility. Within these “Four R’s”, the Indigenous Research Protocol also includes nine basic guiding principles. They are:

1. What Are You Bringing to Our Table? Research should always be reciprocal.
2. Setting the Table. Allow the community in question to decide whether it is in their best interest to participate.
3. Never Take the First. Researchers should consider how their work will reaffirm, refute, or otherwise remain relevant to the community.

4. Listen for the Answer. Conversational interviews are based on the conversational method which stems from Indigenous methods of gathering knowledge, namely oral storytelling.
5. Take Only What is Given.
6. Minimize Harm. Control of the research responses remains solely in the hands of the community prior to public dissemination. Before any knowledge shared by the community in question is published to or shared with a third party, the researcher must request approval with the possibility of revision or redaction. Before writing or printing anything, consider the impact it will have on the community. The end result of the research should benefit the researcher as well as the participating community.
7. Ask Permission.
8. Be Grateful and Give Thanks.
9. Share What You've Taken. (Antunes et al. 2018)

I follow these guiding principles in my empirical work with both case study projects.

While this commitment to anti-colonial methodologies is a necessary starting point for any study on contemporary urbanism, the ways this research has been conducted and its end product—the dissertation—limit the extent to which these principles have been enacted for this particular project. As a researcher in a doctoral program, I approached the leaders of each case study project as an outsider and a newcomer to their work and communities. While I was able to offer some reciprocal commitments, the research design was driven by my own agenda and the research topics that I had established.

This dissertation does not directly benefit the communities who participated. Given the constraints of the dissertation and my role as a newcomer to these communities, I did not conduct a participatory research project in which the community with whom I worked set the agenda and scope of the research. Instead, I worked to contribute and benefit the communities in several other ways, including working as a volunteer for numerous project events, acknowledging interview participants with gifts, writing a short report for one of the project organizations, and offering to continue collaborations for mutual benefit outside of the dissertation work, including securing a start-up grant to support the project collaborators. I discuss these methods and associated challenges as they relate to each case study project in Chapters III and IV. I specify the techniques that I used to follow these guidelines for each project in the corresponding chapters.

An Emphasis on Materiality and Place Through Exploration of the Urban Design Elements of the Projects

In Chapter I, I situated the importance of everyday, urban places and the material world in this research, which explores the role of material, design artifacts and everyday, urban places in the emergence of communities of solidarity. This exploration hinges on an analysis of the ethical-epistemological-ontological underpinnings of ideas of matter and place. As I mentioned in Chapter I, the vast majority of urbanist theory and practice in the Euro-Western context of North America and Europe ignores the role of urbanism in ongoing colonial legacies. Relatedly, urbanist theory and practice in these contexts proceed with an instrumentalist view of the nonhuman world through series of typically unexamined assumptions that include the following: (1) humans are discrete entities, (2)

those entities act somehow autonomously from the rest of the world, (3) the more-than-human material world, including places, is neither alive nor agential, and (4) ethical obligations to the nonhuman world—especially the nonbiotic world—are somehow categorically different than those to humans. In Chapter I, I introduced some of the issues with these sorts of assumptions.

In the following chapters, I continue this analysis through the specific material practices of the two case studies. The methodology for examining materiality and place mirrors the overarching methodologies of the project. I examine North American Indigenous philosophies, posthumanist and new materialist theories, urban theory, and everyday urban practices with and against each other to develop an account of the role of material urban design elements and places in how communities of solidarity form.

The starting assumptions are as follows. Solidarity that includes humans and the more-than-human world requires reworking the outdated, inaccurate, and unexamined assumptions of the world of lifeless or inert 'stuff 'on which urbanism is based. There are many alternative ethical-epistemological-ontological systems in the pluriverse, some of which are included in the theories and practices that I examine here. Pluriversal approaches are necessary to support solidarity across cultural, political, and ecological difference. Thinking and doing across and with the commitments of these ethical-epistemological-ontological systems can develop these needed pluriversal approaches.

Sympoiesis

The concept of sympoiesis provides one entry point into the conceptual pluriverse that recognizes the agential and interactive capacities of the more-than-human world. In *Staying with the Trouble*, Haraway (2016) introduces the term *poiesis*, which is an

important concept in discussions about distributed agency and is also used—albeit differently—by Braidotti (2013). Haraway introduces poiesis in her discussion of tentacular thinking with the briefest of definitions: “the making” (31). The current epoch, which Haraway calls the *Chthulucene* (a rejection of the term *Anthropocene*), is characterized by an Earth made in sympoiesis, in contrast to autopoiesis: “Poiesis is symchthonic, sympoietic, always partnered all the way down, with no starting and subsequently interacting “units”” (33). Autopoiesis is critiqued as an amended individualism. For Haraway (2016), the interactions of the Earth are sympoietic, along the same lines as Karen Barad’s (2007) concepts of intra-action and agential realism, which become, to Haraway, “common sense” (33–34). Rehabilitation and sustainability require sympoiesis (33).

Sympoiesis—making with—is a new term for one of Haraway’s (2016) older concepts, that of staying with the trouble. Making with is important for my project on at least four levels. First, subjectivity is made. Second, solidarity is made. Third, the material (built) environment is also made. Fourth, these three spheres co-make each other. Sympoiesis, then, is a concept that conveys these sorts of intra-actions. Haraway connects these newest terms with an old favorite, that of worlding. Sympoiesis is a worlding operation in which all are involved (55). Haraway elaborates, “Nothing makes itself. . . . Earthlings are never alone” (58). Worlding is becoming, and for Haraway, becoming is always becoming-with. Haraway’s (1988) earlier arguments in “Situated Knowledges” about how the boundaries of objects materialize in social interaction foreshadow those of Karen Barad' (2007), who presented her an account of agential realism nineteen years after Haraway’s essay.

Experiencing a Living Universe: Some Guidance from Indigenous Ontologies and Epistemologies

While new materialisms, posthumanisms, informal urbanisms, and North American Indigenous philosophies of place all include accounts of the agential capacities of the nonhuman and nonbiotic world, several aspects of Indigenous philosophies are markedly distinct from any of the other systems discussed here. North American Indigenous philosophies of place span a broad range of ontological, epistemological, and ethical orientations, but these varied traditions generally attribute agential capacities to nonhuman and nonbiotic entities, and there is a shared understanding that aliveness extends beyond biotic organisms. This sense of aliveness is bound up in various spiritual and religious traditions that hold that the nature of existence is spiritual or religious. Relatedly, tribal traditions recognize nonphysical aspects of existence—that is, aliveness includes nonphysical, spiritual beings as well as beings in physical form. The aliveness of all things means that all entities are recognized as persons. This means that all relationships—as relationships between persons—have an ethical component, and these relationships are marked by reciprocal agreements. Lastly, places themselves are recognized as living, expressive entities (Atleo 2004, 2011; Deloria, [1979] 2012, [1973] 2003; Deloria and Wildcat 2001; Larsen and Johnson 2016; Marker 2018; Norton Smith 2014; Watson and Huntington 2008; Watts 2013).

In addition to these ontological starting points, Indigenous epistemologies diverge dramatically from typical Euro-Western standards. Deloria (2012) begins *Metaphysics of Modern Existence* with a critique of the non-Indian (his term) cultural norm of abstract thinking, rather than experiential thinking. Deloria's comparative analysis of Euro-

Western and Indigenous peoples' epistemologies illuminates the barriers to Euro-Westerners' understanding of the agency of place and materiality. The barriers are largely a function of the epistemology with which the dominant culture approaches experiences of the world. The ways in which non-Indians and tribal peoples receive information about reality differ dramatically (35). According to Deloria, Euro-Western thought relies on pre-existing concepts to verify and explain encounters in the world, while tribal peoples trust the reality of their experiences.

Deloria (2012) argues that tribal knowledge is based on direct experience, on perception based on observation, as well as on emotion and intuition in response to an experience. In contrast, Euro-Westerners, by relying on logic, abstraction, and pre-existing concepts, engage with the world with a lack of trust in their own encounters with it. Such an orientation results in a narrowing of experience and a distancing from directly lived encounters. Deloria articulates the deep divide between Indian and non-Indian (his terms) epistemologies:

> If an Indian tells other Indians that he or she has seen a ghost, describes the experience, and asks others for advice, he or she is taken to be a serious person with a serious problem. . . . The Indian confronts the reality of the experience, and while he or she may not make immediate sense of it, it is not rejected as an invalid experience. In the Indian world, experience is not limited by mental considerations and assumptions regarding the universe. For the non-Indian the teachings of a lifetime come thundering down. Such things do not occur in time and space. Reality is basically physical. No one sees ghosts. Reality, in a certain sense, is what you allow your mind to accept, not what you experience. And a

> host of other beliefs rush in to cover up, confuse, and eventually eliminate the experience itself. (5)

Deloria contends that humans have directly experienced communications from the nonhuman world—from other living animals and plants, from stones, and from the land itself. Furthermore, because direct experience is a valid form of obtaining knowledge, it can be trusted. Therefore, nonhuman elements of the world communicate to humans. The nature of the world as alive and intelligent can be understood through experience that—under certain conditions—is available to anyone (26, 30).

In other texts, Deloria offers some suggestions for how those steeped in dominant culture can encounter the living, intelligent nature of reality. Deloria's (1999a) essay, "Reflection and Revelation," published in *For This Land*, includes a critical view of non-Indians' attempts to understand Indians' ways of being, particularly attempts to understand what it means for land to be sacred. Although it is not impossible for non-Indians to develop an understanding of the agential nature of materiality reality, especially the sacredness of place, there are some strong barriers. Deloria claims, however, that culturally predetermined concepts can be revisited and revised through redirecting one's focus to the immediacy of direct experience:

> We look beyond concepts to the immediate experiences that gave rise to them and hope to exclude the interpretation that has divided the world into two parallel systems of thought which never coalesce. From the raw data of experience, we must seek a familiarity with intensity and content that characterizes events so as to allow experience to reorder itself in a more flexible and universal manner. (30)

Scattered across Deloria's body of work, a methodology is provided for accessing experience directly, outside the confines of culturally determined concepts.

First, while knowledge in the Euro-Western sense is abstract and largely conducted for its own sake, Deloria posits that knowledge arises through ongoing relationships, which involve some sort of giving of the knower. In *For This Land* (1999a), Deloria suggests that one must give deeply to the land in specific places in order to be able to communicate with it (253). Regardless of their culture, those who care for the land over time can learn to communicate with it.

Second, because Native American peoples recognize that the universe is intelligent and communicative, their approach is to accept information as it is offered. Deloria and Wildcat (2001) explain,

> We may elicit and force secrets from nature, but nature is only answering the specific questions we ask it. It is not giving us the whole story as it would if it were specifically involved in the communication of knowledge. What is given willingly is much more valuable than what is demanded as a matter of force. (65)

In contrast, contemporary Euro-Western science makes no room for the notion that some parts of the world are not to be interrogated.

Third, Euro-Western knowledge, experience, and relationships are based on the concept of an individual. In contrast, according to Deloria (1999a), Indigenous peoples' understanding of the sacredness of the land is based on a community's relationship with it. Indigenous peoples had and have agreements with the land and non-human peoples that are derived from long-term relationships as a community. Although individuals did

and do receive communications from the land and nonhuman peoples, the information is provided for the community. Revelation was sought for the well-being of the group, not for the advancement of an individual. (252). Furthermore, Native American knowledge is produced within a social reality in which humans, other animals, and the rest of the world exist as communities. Other animals and entities such as trees, stones, and mountains offer instructions for humans about how to live, act, and build. Humans, recognizing their dependence on the rest of the world for material support and for knowledge about how to live, treat other community members with respect (Deloria and Wildcat 2001, 24). Regardless of one's particular culture, a reorientation to action in service of the human and nonhuman community seems to be part of the process of developing the ability to access experience directly. The information shared by a particular entity might not be solely or explicitly for the benefit of an individual who receives it. The notion that any information obtained is for the individual who obtains it may limit access to direct experience.

Fourth, while Euro-Western knowledge seeks universal truths and claims that can be replicated and standardized across different places and times, for Deloria, the universe is personal; that is, different information is revealed at different times and places to different persons. Recall that humans are not the only kinds of persons, and that nonhuman persons are able to communicate intelligently. At base, tribal epistemologies differ starkly from Euro-Western empiricism, in that claims to the truth of an event or experience do not rely on evidence of generalizability or replicability.

Methodologically speaking, Deloria's guidance provides a way for people from various cultural traditions to perceive/experience the agential nature of the world through

direct engagement with it. I have distilled Deloria's contributions into the following five guiding methodological principles for research with the nonhuman world (note that these principles are very similar to the principles laid out in the Indigenous Research Protocol (Antunes et al. 2018) detailed above):

1. Learn by doing and being in the world.
2. Learn by giving to the world.
3. Accept what is offered from the situation.
4. Recognize that knowledge comes from the community and is for the community—research includes service to others.
5. Remember that information is communicated at particular times and places, not at all times and places.

As I discussed in Chapter I, respectful engagement and practice with Indigenous ontologies and epistemologies and intentional analysis of current practice through the lenses provided by posthumanist theory offer a way for those urbanists steeped in an instrumentalist view of the material world to begin to recognize their positionality and to start to notice that the world abounds with alternatives to the outdated, inaccurate, mechanistic views on which urban practice and theory are based. Deloria (2012) claims that an examination of ontological assumptions is a necessary starting point for building ways of living and thinking that transcend cultural knowledge boundaries. Arturo Escobar (2017) notes that only privileged groups can exist with the mindset that they have no ontology. A pluriverse is ontological difference itself; it is "a world where many worlds fit" (xvii). In agreement with Deloria (2012), I emphasize that a pluriversal world —in Deloria's terms, a metaphysics of modern existence—requires one to become adept at noticing and engaging ontological and epistemological diversity.

CHAPTER III. AN INVITATION TO THE PLURIVERSE—THE TOTEM POLE JOURNEY

Introduction

In this chapter, I analyze the House of Tears Carvers Totem Pole Journey (TPJ) as a temporary, participatory, urban intervention. I focus on the role of more-than-human animals, design artifacts, and everyday urban places in how communities of solidarity form through this project. My analysis is based on preliminary research that I conducted by attending TPJ events in the Pacific Northwest in 2017, in-depth field research that I conducted during the 2019 TPJ, and the research collaboration that I have been working to cultivate with the TPJ and other individuals and entities since then (May 2019–Summer 2021). I refer briefly to the numerous tours that project leaders have led since the TPJ project started in 2001.

In the following pages, I provide a summary of my research methods for this project, the details of how I have engaged with the project, and the approaches that I employ to analyze the results of this engagement. I then provide a brief synopsis of the TPJ, including a schematic of a TPJ event and a summary of the specific campaign that is focused on protection and recovery of the Salish Sea and securing the release of an individual orca in captivity. In the second half of the chapter, I analyze the project through the specific questions of this dissertation.

Research Methods for the Totem Pole Journey Case Study

My research for this case study was framed first and foremost by the commitments to respectful engagement with Indigenous Research Protocols (Antunes et al. 2018, 5) and methodologies that I outlined in Chapter II. Prior to contacting the TPJ leaders, I carefully considered my response to Step 1: What Are You Bringing to the Table? (5). Step 1 asks researchers to consider and identify their own positionality. The Protocol encourages researchers to undertake a process of personal reflection prior to engaging with a new community:

> Ask yourself, which aspects of your experience have contributed to your role as a researcher? Are there any labels or communities that you are a part of, where identifying as such could help the community determine if developing a relationship around research is appropriate? Who are you affiliated with, on a personal, political, or academic level? Do you hold any moral or internal biases that could contribute to, or inhibit your ability to complete this research in a respectful manner? (Antunes et al. 2018, 4–5)

This first step of the Indigenous Research Protocol is also an auto ethnographical method through which I situate myself as a researcher and a participant in the larger social, political, and environmental topics under study.

Here is an excerpt of my self-assessment for Step 1 (Antunes et al 2018), in which I reflect on the circumstances and interests that led me to approach the TPJ as a dissertation case study:

> My first encounter with the Totem Pole Journey was in 2014, when I read an article about the project while doing a small study on the Tikitomoki Poles in

Jamison Square in Portland, Oregon. These poles had been designed by Brooklyn artist Kenny Scharf and I was working on an essay noting the juxtaposition of these “out of place” poles with the traditions of totem poles of Indigenous peoples of the broader region. The article included a quote from Jewell James about the intent of the Totem Pole Journey:

“What we’re doing is we’re using it to call people to gather. It’s when people gather together that the sacred exists” (James, quoted in Cortes 2014).

Jewell’s statement stayed with me for years as I developed my scholarly interests in sacred space in urban places.

In 2017, as part of an earlier research project on sacred spaces (Meier 2021) and out of personal interest, I attended several Totem Pole Journey events around the Pacific Northwest, including events at the Lummi Tribal Center and in Vancouver, BC, Seattle, Vancouver, Washington, Portland, Oregon, and via livestream in Tacoma, Washington.

In 2018, the carvers launched a new campaign dedicated to securing the release of an orca whale in captivity named Tokitae (stage name Lolita). I kept apprised of the activities via livestreams and social media posts while I worked on my doctoral program.

Then, in July 2018, another Southern Resident killer whale in the Salish Sea made worldwide news. This orca, named Tahlequah (also known as J35), gave birth to a baby girl, who died within minutes after her birth. Tahlequah carried her dead

baby for 17 days and more than 1,000 miles before she let the calf's body sink beneath the water. Tahlequah's actions were heavily covered in regional and global news. It was widely accepted among Indigenous and non-Indigenous observers that Tahlequah was sending a message to the human world. Each day the calls for response grew. The Southern Resident Killer Whales were starving. Tahlequah's calf was the third in recent years to die of malnourishment.

I followed the heartbreaking saga day by day. I remembered my own personal encounter with a gray whale from years earlier on a tribal-led whale watching outing off the west coast of Vancouver Island. Like George Tinker (2004), since that encounter, I have wondered what to do with it and if I could trust my experience. Struck by Tahlequah's suffering and what I took to be a clear message from her, I committed myself to more attentiveness to these nonhuman communications. In order to remember this commitment and Tahlequah's story, I printed a photo of orcas swimming in ocean waves and set it on my desk so I would see it every day. I did see the photo every day, and Tahlequah's story stayed with me.

On May 11, 2019, I felt compelled to do more than just bear witness to the suffering. I wrote Jewell James and asked if there might be any upcoming activities I could join as a doctoral student researcher and as a volunteer with extensive experience in event coordination. Although I had attended several events in 2017, I had done so as an outside observer and I had never spoken with the Totem Pole Journey leaders. However, Jewell quickly responded.

My first message to Jewell James was framed by my commitments to following the guidance in Steps 2 and 3 of the Indigenous Research Protocol (Antunes et al. 2018). Step 2: Setting the Table guides researchers to be clear about their goals and purposes prior to contacting a community. This step emphasizes ensuring that a project will be mutually beneficial. It also instructs the researcher to make space for a dialogue that includes questions and critique from potential collaborators. Relatedly, Step 3: Never Take the First, asks a researcher to consider how their work will "reaffirm, refute, or otherwise remain relevant to the community" (Antunes et al. 2018, 5). I followed the guidance of Step 2 and Step 3 by presenting my request to participate and an offer to assist the project. I also engaged in a discussion and negotiation with the research collaborators to work out specific terms of my participation. Throughout this process, I also followed the guidance offered in Step 7: Ask Permission, which states that a researcher should perform "personal research to understand how to approach your project in a way that is respectful to the spirit by clarifying and being upfront about your intentions and regard for the knowledge and the people you want to include" (Antunes et al. 2018, 7).

Jewell James's response to my message on May 12, 2019, was prompt, direct, and clear:

> Call Dr. KURT RUSSO. He is my coordinator. We begin in Los Angeles in June then move north. Sounds good to me. Will have to assure him you cover your own costs and will not intervene unless asked. Let him know you are a strategist and coordinator. Call our office tomorrow at [phone number] in [Lummi Tribal] council operations.

I called Dr. Kurt Russo the next day, on a Monday afternoon. Kurt answered the phone, and I explained that Jewell had directed me to him. We spoke for some time. I explained my research interests and indicated that I wanted to work with the project in “a good way.” I offered to help with the tour in whatever way needed in exchange for permission to talk with participants at events about their experience and participate myself. Kurt said, “Okay, we’ll take your promises.” We clarified our terms: I would cover all of my own expenses, including transportation, food, and lodging. Kurt emphasized that I would only participate in each event as invited. Kurt’s instructions made clear the importance of adhering to Step 5 of the Protocol: Take Only What is Given (Antunes et al. 2018).

After my first conversation with Kurt Russo, we further clarified the terms of my participation through a series of emails and phone calls. In a perhaps overzealous attempt to articulate what I meant by my intention to do research in a “good way,” I shared a detailed, written protocol with Kurt and another TPJ team member, Matt Fuller, a doctoral student and a longtime TPJ volunteer who had traveled on several journeys to assist with media operations. This written protocol was the first part of efforts to follow Step 6: Minimize Harm and Step 7: Ask Permission. These steps call on researchers to practice ongoing communication with collaborators and to obtain “free, prior, and informed consent” from the potential research participants (Antunes et al. 2018, 7).

Finally, the terms of our arrangement were established. Matt would be my primary contact for the TPJ events. We agreed that I would assist Matt and other TPJ leaders with livestreaming, photography, interviews for the TPJ video archives, and other tasks as requested.

Data Collection Methods

My role as an active participant in the in-person and virtual aspects of the TPJ events provided an immersive experience through which to develop an auto material, ethnographical analysis of the project. I recorded my experiences at the events via audio, video, photo, and written notes. I worked with other event helpers to prepare food, set up chairs and tables, hang banners, and perform any other tasks to ensure that the event was executed smoothly. During these activities, I focused on how people interacted with each other, with the material elements and places, and with me. I spoke informally with participants and local hosts. I made audio recordings of conversations for my own research, as well as livestreams or video recordings of interviews at the request of the TPJ project leaders. I gave special attention to the nonverbal and nonhuman sonic elements of the events by listening closely to ambient sounds during the events themselves and through my audio and video recordings. An important part of this attention to soundscapes is the practice of noticing silence and the spaces between sounds and speaking.

2017: Preliminary Field Research

Prior to my formal involvement in the TPJ project, I conducted preliminary research for the TPJ case study by attending several TPJ events in the U.S. Pacific Northwest. In 2017, I attended TPJ events on these dates and in these places:

- October 12, 2017: Lummi Community Center, Lummi Reservation, Washington
- October 13, 2017: A city plaza outside the Vancouver Art Gallery, Vancouver, British Columbia

- October 14, 2017: University Congregational United Church of Christ, Seattle, Washington
- October 15, 2017: Foss Waterway Seaport, Tacoma, Washington (via Facebook Livestream)
- October 16, 2017: Vancouver Community Library, Vancouver, Washington
- October 17, 2017: Natural Capital Center (Ecotrust Building), Portland, Oregon

These experiences inspired this project and my earlier work on the emergence of sacred spaces in urban places (Meier 2021).

2019: Participant Observation

I participated as an observer and a volunteer helper in 2019 West Coast TPJ events on these dates and in these places:

- June 7, 2019: Van Nuys City Hall, Van Nuys, California
- June 8, 2019: Topanga Community Center, Topanga, California
- June 9, 2019: California Academy of Sciences, San Francisco, California
- June 11, 2019: Natural Capital Center (Ecotrust Building), Portland, Oregon
- June 12, 2019: Puyallup Reservation, Washington
- June 13, 2019: Whatcom Museum, Bellingham, Washington
- June 14, 2019: Coupeville Town Park, Coupeville, Washington
- June 15, 2019: Olympic Sculpture Park, Seattle Art Museum, Seattle, Washington

After the conclusion of the West Coast portion of the 2019 TPJ, I attended three additional, related events during the summer and fall of 2019. During these three events, I attended as an outside observer, rather than as an active participant or volunteer helper:

- July 24, 2019: Paddle to Lummi, Lummi Reservation, Washington. I traveled to the Lummi Nation reservation on July 24, 2019 for Paddle to Lummi, the annual Tribal Canoe Journey, which was hosted by Lummi Nation that year. TPJ project leader Freddie Lane had advertised the Canoe Journey at each TPJ event. He invited people from all TPJ events to attend. During the Canoe Journey event, the Tokitate Totem Pole was displayed prominently on the event grounds at the headquarters near the shore where canoes arrived from throughout the Pacific Northwest. This central location allowed all Canoe Journey participants and attendees to view the Tokitae Totem Pole.
- July 27, 2019: Press Conference for Tokitae/Lolita/ Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. I attended this event via Facebook livestream. The in-person event was held on the shores of the Lummi Reservation, with the primary goal of announcing plans to file a lawsuit to secure the release of the orca known as Tokitae, Lolita, and Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. The event included the announcement of the tribe's intent to sue, presenters who spoke of the importance of freeing Tokitae and restoring the Salish Sea, and ceremonial activities in support of the effort.
- September 27, 2019: Netse Mot: One Mind for the Salish Sea, Blaine, Washington. I attended this event on a pier in Blaine, Washington, near the U.S./Canadian border. Netse Mot is a Lummi term that means "one mind and one heart" (Sierra Club 2021, 5). The intent of the event was to raise awareness of the perils facing the Salish Sea and to build solidarity among Indigenous and non-Indigenous groups from both sides of the U.S./Canadian border. The Facebook event announcement invited all people to attend: "Come stand with us to protect

our waters, our salmon, qwe'lhol'mechen (orcas), Treaty rights, Indigenous lifeways. Meet at the border to show that no line divides us, we are of one mind, when it comes to protecting our shared home" (SacredSea.org et al. 2019). The event included numerous speakers from a variety of conservation groups, climate activists, and Indigenous leaders. Some people participated while standing on the pier, and a large group of people participated by boats and kayaks that assembled in the water around the pier. In total, more than 400 people participated (Sierra Club 2021).

Summer 2020: Engaging in the Conversational Method via Guest Speakers in an Environmental Ethics Class

COVID-19 curtailed my plans to conduct follow-up interviews with TPJ leaders and allies in the spring of 2020. Not only were in-person meetings impossible during the initial months of the pandemic, but people were in various states of duress and upheaval due to economic, health, and other uncertainties and crises. These circumstances prompted a revised approach that allowed me to meet multiple project commitments and objectives. Through consultation with TPJ projects leaders and my University of Oregon (UO) collaborator, Dr. Barbara Muraca, I elected to organize my UO summer environmental ethics class around the case study of Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut and the TPJ. In this way, we could (1) continue to develop the collaborative relationship that we had initiated with the TPJ project and (2) provide a platform for the TPJ leaders and allies to share their work with the thirty-five+ students in the summer class. These presentations were recorded and edited for use in future UO classes. Dr. Barbara Muraca incorporated

the recorded presentations into her winter term 2021 environmental ethics class and the recordings are available for other UO instructors.

To provide nominal monetary acknowledgement for guest speakers' contributions, I successfully petitioned to redirect a seed grant that I had received from the UO Environmental Studies Program to provide honorariums for each guest speaker. These efforts were in keeping with the Indigenous Research Protocol (Antunes et al. 2018) principles of (1) sharing what is taken and (2) honoring and engaging reciprocally with research participants. This arrangement also made it possible for me to meet my own research goals of including the TPJ case study in this dissertation.

The following TPJ project leaders and allies joined the online summer environmental ethics class for real-time/synchronous presentations and discussions:

- June 25, 2020: Freddie Lane, elected Lummi Tribal Council Member and TPJ leader
- July 1, 2020: Kurt Russo, TPJ leader and representative of the Lummi Nation Treaty and Sovereignty Protection Office
- July 8, 2020: Jay Julius, former Lummi Tribal Chairman
- July 15, 2020: Chenoa Egawa, Lummi tribal member and ceremonialist; and Bonnie Swift, podcaster and storyteller
- July 22, 2020: Beka Economopolous, The Natural History Museum; and Robyn Everett, Sierra Club
- July 29, 2020: Doug and Jewell James, TPJ project leaders
- August 4, 2020: Rueben George, Sacred Trust, Tsleil Waututh Nation (British Columbia, Canada)

The presentations were recorded with the permission of the guest speakers. Using these recordings, I created written transcripts. The analysis of those transcripts informed this case study chapter.

Reciprocity in Research: Building a Research, Teaching, and Advocacy Collaboration

In addition to advice on how to establish research relationships with communities, the Indigenous Research Protocol offers guidance on how the knowledge produced through research with Indigenous communities can be formulated and distributed. This guidance is encapsulated in Step 8: Be Grateful and Give Thanks and Step 9: Share What You've Taken. Step 8 notes that it is common practice not to share research findings with the communities that helped to produce them, but rather to distribute results only within academic circles. This step asks researchers to consider how they will "give back to the community for the time, efforts and knowledge you have gained for your research" and "how [your] presence and/or research [will] benefit the community" (Antunes et al. 2018, 8). Prior to first contacting Jewell James, I made a personal commitment to collaborative research and to endeavor to "benefit the community" by offering not only to assist during the 2019 events, but to support the project on a longer-term basis if the project leaders so desired.

I approached Dr. Kurt Russo at the close of the TPJ event in Seattle, which was the last event of the 2019 TPJ journey. We spoke briefly, and I offered to stay involved. Kurt stated that I should keep in contact, and I did so. Beginning in October 2019, Kurt Russo, Dr. Barbara Muraca, and I began to plan an initial visit for Kurt to the UO campus. We hosted Kurt for a series of events on the UO campus in January 2020. The intent of this visit was to share the TPJ with the UO campus community and to explore

possibilities for further research, teaching, and advocacy collaborations. Although our plans changed due to the COVID-19 pandemic, we have continued to develop our collaboration since then, first through the summer term environmental ethics class that I have described above. In the months that followed, Kurt, Barbara, and I met regularly to plan larger efforts. In April 2021, our efforts were funded by an Incubating Interdisciplinary Initiatives Award through the UO Office of the Vice President for Research and Innovation. As of August 2021, we are preparing to launch a broader research, teaching, and advocacy initiative that will include hosting the TPJ team and the Tokitae Totem Pole on the UO campus.

Presentation of the Case Study

<u>The Origins and Intent of the Totem Pole Journey</u>

As introduced in Chapter I, Jewell James (Figure 3.1) launched the first Totem Pole Journey in response to the September 11, 2001 attacks. These totem poles were originally conceived as healing poles. The commitment to healing and bringing people together for a common good remains a core organizing principle for the TPJ now, in 2021. More than a dozen totem poles have served as central organizing components to as many campaigns in the past twenty years. The TPJ incorporates specific places, material design artifacts, and sensory experiences in its various campaigns to build solidarity around particular issues.

<u>The House of Tears Carvers Totem Poles</u>

Jewell James leads the House of Tears Carvers and the carving of the totem poles (Figure 3.1). Jewell's brother, Doug James, and several other people help to make each pole from cedar trees harvested from the Pacific Northwest. The carvings on the poles are

Figure 3.1. Jewell James, Master Carver and Totem Pole Journey Leader, at the Totem Pole Journey event at the Seattle Art Museum Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Washington.

tailored specifically to each campaign by Jewell, a master carver, and the House of Tears Carvers. During Totem Pole Journey events, the totem poles are displayed horizontally, typically on a truck bed or trailer (Figure 3.2). Each tour concludes with the placement of the pole either on exhibit or in its permanent location. Since 2002, Jewell and Doug James and the House of Tears Carvers have produced totem poles for more than a dozen journeys, in addition to myriad other carvings and totem poles for various other purposes. The TPJ poles have been exhibited in museums and gifted to communities engaged in various campaigns.

<u>Summary of 2019 TPJ Campaign and Purpose of the Tour</u>

In 2019, TPJ project leaders led a return journey from Florida to Lummi Nation with a totem pole that they had carved in honor of a captive orca whale. While this was

the first campaign focused specifically on orcas, whales have been part of the TPJ since the very beginning. In the 1990s, TPJ leaders Doug and Jewell James were given a song by a dying Minke whale. They sang that song as they traveled across the country with the healing pole in 2002 to commemorate the 9/11 attacks. They have sung the song at almost every TPJ event since then.

Figure 3.2. October 15, 2017: A Totem Pole Journey Event at the Public Library in Vancouver, Washington.

In the past several years, the TPJ team has set out to free an orca who has been living in captivity in Miami, Florida, since 1970. Since her capture, various humans have named this individual orca. She is known as Lolita, Tokitae, and now Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut is the name that was given to her by Bill James, the Lummi hereditary chief, in 2019 in recognition that she was captured from the Salish Sea waters

off the shore from a traditional Lummi village called Sk'ali. In 2018, the carvers journeyed with the totem pole they had carved in her honor from Lummi Nation to Miami, Florida. The 2018 events culminated in an exhibit at Florida International University, which hosted the totem pole on exhibit until May 2019.

The campaign to free Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut is grounded in a particular ontology that recognizes whales as relatives of the human Lummi people. Orcas are recognized as intelligent beings that have the ability to communicate with humans in multiple ways, including via telepathic and spiritual methods (James and James, July 29, 2020). The project leaders make continual efforts to explain this ontology at TPJ events. The TPJ leaders invite people from outside the Lummi tradition to participate in this way of understanding the orcas and their relationship with humans. Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's subjectivity—and that of the humans working to secure her release—is one of the innumerable points of convergence of pluriversal perspectives in the Totem Pole Journey. That this ontology must be explained is illustrative of how the dominant cultural context for research is housed within another sort of ontology.

With the permission of the TPJ project leaders (following Principle 6 of the Indigenous Research Protocol), in the following pages, I share the story of the campaign to free Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. The story is one of a relational ontology grounded in a Lummi worldview. The story also extends beyond the Lummi cultural tradition and includes not only humans from multiple cultural and geographical contexts, but also both Minke and orca whales in the Salish Sea.

In sharing this story, I have included extensive quotes in order to maintain the integrity of the story as it was told by the people who directly experienced it. Because it

is their story and because it presents particular ways of being and knowing the world, I believe that it is most appropriate that these ways of being and knowing are learned through firsthand reports, rather than mediated by my interpretations or explanations. My analysis follows this overview of the campaign.

The following stories were shared primarily during the presentations that Doug James, Jewell James, Kurt Russo, and Freddie Lane gave as part of the environmental ethics class that I taught at the University of Oregon in the summer of 2020. The class was held via online video. These stories were told to a group consisting of about 30 undergraduate students, Dr. Barbara Muraca, and myself. The TPJ project leaders also shared these stories at numerous TPJ events during the 2019 journey, but I have included direct quotes from the class presentations here in order to maintain the narrative flow of the stories as they were told for that occasion. I also elected to include the version told during the class because the class format allowed for longer versions of the stories to be told than were feasible at most of the TPJ events.

Origins—The Story of the Spirit Returned and the Song Given by a Minke Whale

In the following excerpt, Doug James situates the campaign to free Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut by explaining his firsthand experience with whale communications to humans:

> You know, what I'd like to do is to bring you up to speed on how these whales have the ability to communicate with human beings through telepathic messages or through spiritual connections. And we first encountered our own personal encounter with a minke whale back in the 90s. This whale sacrificed her life by putting herself upon the beach of our home waters here at Lummi Nation here in Washington State. We got a call that this whale was up on the shallows, and my

brother Jewell, he hurried and got a group of men together, you know, about 20 of them, you know, to try and push this Minke whale back into the deeper waters, and as they're pushing, they only were able to move her maybe 15, 20 feet and then the tide went out. And so, as this whale was laying there dying, her last few heartbeats, that we were hearing, we heard this song. And we captured that song. And as we practiced the song over and over and over, we finally got it, and that song ended up what they call the *eik shwa lo wen* [spelled phonetically here]. And what that means is that whale was telling us all to be of one heart and one mind.

Doug next explains how the story has come to be part of the Totem Pole Journey:

> And so, we shared that song across this whole country back in the healing pole journey we went on. That was our first journey across this nation, was bringing a healing pole across this country during—after 9/11 happened. And we used that to draw people together to come together and place their hands upon that pole, to pray on it and send their prayer across country to those that perished in 9/11 and those families that were left behind. And as we journeyed halfway across the United States, people were coming from two states below us and two states above us to intersect us there, just to come and put their hands on that pole and to pray. And so, we shared that song with every stop that we made and we sang it. We sang it over here, standing in the waters on the West Coast here, and when we got over to the East Coast, we stood in the waters on the shores over there and sang our song there. So that song ended up being a major part of these journeys that we went on all these different pole journeys.

In the following excerpt, Doug emphasizes that he is showing the students, Barbara, and me how the whales communicate with humans:

> These whales are totally capable of reaching out. And the reason that this whale beached herself upon our shores, we had an elder that had the vision, had the eyes and ears, spiritual eyes and spiritual ears to hear and understand why this whale did that. There was an 18-year-old boy from the Makah nation. He got hit on the head there and died. And his spirit was wandering down on them shores, on that land down there, and this whale took pity upon his spirit and came to the shore there and told his boy that they were ancient ancestors of his family and that she was going to carry him back home to where his mother's home is here in Lummi Nation. So, there was two Minke whales that came into the Bellingham Bay and they were circling around and around out there in the waters. And where they were circling was right in front of this boy's mother's family. And as one whale swam back out into the deep waters, that's when the other whale beached herself. The elder was telling me that that boy's spirit was released at that very moment she beached herself. And so that was leading up to us receiving that song, she left us the *eik shwa lo wen* [spelled phonetically here]. I'd like to share that song with you right now. And before we go any further. So, with that, we'll go ahead and do that.

The TPJ team has posted livestreams of many of their events on the project's Facebook page. The song can be heard here at about 1:53:00: https://www.facebook.com/471733206227550/videos/3104082199071thirty-five

Doug shared this song at most of the events during the 2019 Totem Pole Journey.

Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's Plea for Help

The story of the Minke whale sets the context for how Doug and Jewell came to be involved with the effort to free Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. In the following excerpts, Doug explains his initial encounter with Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut, then known as Lolita and Tokitae.

> My traditional name is Sit Ke Kadum, Sit Ke Kadum [pronounced Sit-kee-kay-dem]. My brother Jewell carries the name Se Sealth [pronounced: Sa'-see-alth]. So, I would just like to kind of lead you down this path that we were put on. We were on a pole journey that ended up in Winnipeg. And we just so happened—we stopped down in Oregon—and we had a gathering at St. Paul's Cathedral. And so, we were wrapping up that evening and this lady comes over from Vancouver, Washington, looking for us. And it just so happened that my brother received a phone call from a radio station at that time and she introduced herself to my brother Jewell and he says, well, I got to take this call and he says here, talk to my brother Doug. And so, this is when this was brought to our attention about Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut, known as Lolita and Tokitae. She explained to me really briefly, you know, how this all came about and what she received and the message that she received in the spiritual realm from a 14-year-old young girl down in New York, she had Down syndrome. And this young girl, she kept hearing this message over and over that this whale is crying out and she's saying, "Is there anybody out there that can hear me? Anybody out there that can hear me? I want to go home. I want to go home. Anybody, help me go home." And this young girl, it was probably about two or three years prior to us being in Oregon.

> This lady was living on the San Juan Islands, and this is where she received that message. Now, the message she received from that young girl in New York, you know, she had that gift of reaching out, you know, in the same way this whale does telepathically. And she put that message out and this lady carried that message for about three years and she caught up to us in Oregon there. And she said, “Do you think there's anything that Lummi could do to help bring this whale home?” And I told her, “You know, Jennifer, at this time, you know, there is really not much we can do at this very moment in time, we're on this journey, this totem pole journey, and we have to stay the course. We can’t waiver from our course at this time.” And so, I told her this, “I tell you what, let's put it to prayer and see where it goes.” And so, we prayed right there in front of St. Paul's Cathedral and asked for guidance and asked, you know, to show us the way. And over the next few years, you know, message after message after message kept coming and it helped guide us along. Along the path that we were on that we were instructed to go get our whale, you know, because she comes from the Southern L Pod here in the San Juan Islands.

Doug next explains how he and Jewell have responded to Sk’aliCh’elh-tenaut’s call for help to go home:

> And so, you know, we've been on this path ever since, you know, and we've been making journeys down to Florida, you know, meeting with the owners of the Seaquarium and asking, you know, to let her come home. You know, she's been in captivity down there for 50 years now. She was only four years old, I believe, when she was first captured. So now, you know, we've got a group that is coming

alongside of us. But what's that lawyer’s group's name? Earth Law. You know, I believe it's Earth Law group of attorneys that are fighting for such cases like this. Anyway, we've been making these journeys down to Florida. I've been down there three times so far, and my brother Jewell and I, we carved this cedar carving of a whale. . . . Before we even started on this whale, you know, we were starting to whittle on the wood, we got to talking about, you know, what are we going to put on it? And we talked about . . . well, let's put a wolf head on it, because these orcas are also called—they run in kind of what they call wolf packs—they are called sea wolves because they hunt in packs. So that's what we carved on this on this carving that we did. It's a 16-foot carving that we did. And the path that we took down all the way to Miami, you know, we've done different stops all the way down, come down to the West Coast and cut across country. And we brought that right down to the Seaquarium down there, and we had a gathering right across the road from the Seaquarium. And it was it was a pretty powerful day that day. . . . And so, this whale has got a five-foot dorsal fin on it. And then we decided to put the whale rider on there. And so, we left the pole down in Gainesville Museum down there at their Gainesville College. So, we decided to honor that whale rider, to honor Bailey, that young lady that first received the message from the whale. So, we dubbed that Whale Rider, her name is Bailey in her honor. And so again, you know, many people came forward, you know, and introduced us to a lot of children, you know, as we came across country. We received a lot of moral support, you know, and in those gatherings, you know, we started picking up a lot of different people, you know that, and there was one young lady that we met in

LA. That she heard that this was going on and she came to meet us, and she said that when she was a young girl about nine years old in 1970, she seen this capturing going on in Penn Cove, just right outside of Coupeville. It's a dead-end little inlet there. And back in the old days, there used to be one of the main villages, one of the villages there, you know, the Lummi people dominated the San Juan Islands back in the old days there and all the main villages were out in them islands out there. So, anyway, our chief last year, he wanted to put a new name on Tokitae there, and he decided to call her Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. And the name comes from the village that was at the head of that cove there. And that village was called Sk'ali. So, you know, so we renamed her last year outside of the Seaquarium. So, we've been making these journeys in order to try and keep the moral support going. A couple of our native women filed a lawsuit and they took on making this lawsuit, you know, and meeting with different attorneys. So, now that this is going in full swing, you know, we're just hoping that we could bring this all about where we have a place for her, an enclosure that we'll put out in the islands out here so that she can re-acclimate back into the Sound.

Her pod is still swimming around out there. Her mother is still alive. She's the monarch of the pod out here. Now, this grandmother of Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut just died last year at one hundred and four. So, these whales do live quite a while and so with that, you know, I was just kind of leading up to that these whales do have the ability to reach out. They have that spiritual connection. We have that spiritual connection with the Qwe 'lhol mechen. Qwe 'lhol mechen are the relatives that

> live under the sea. So, I want to put my hands up to all of you, you know, all of the students that have been following along, what's going on here, you know, and that we're going to stay the course, you know, and say thank you to you for your moral support.

This story takes place in a broader context that includes the decades-long efforts of many individuals and organizations to secure Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's release. The broader context includes an economic and social system that made it financially compelling, morally acceptable, and legally permissible for a group of men to enter the waters of the Salish Sea and capture young orcas in a brutal round-up. Their actions resulted in the death of numerous individual orcas as they fought to keep their children from being taken from their the pod. Part of that broad and difficult context is the specific cultural traditions of the Lummi people, who have long and deep connections with the orcas.

Lummi tribal leader and TPJ project leader Freddie Lane shared another traditional Lummi story related to the tribal relationship with the whales with the UO environmental studies class on June 24, 2020. There are many more stories and lessons centering on how whales exist in relation with the Lummi people and others, but the purpose of this dissertation is to focus on how the TPJ project brings people and the nonhuman world together through participatory, temporary activities in urban spaces. To that end, I next describe the Tokitae Totem Pole and TPJ event locations. My analysis of the TPJ events as they relate to this dissertation research follows.

The Tokitae Totem Pole

The Tokitae totem pole was carved in honor of and is a representation of Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. At the time of carving, Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut had yet to receive her new name and was referred to as Tokitae or Lolita. Therefore, the totem pole is generally referred to as the Tokitae totem pole. The totem pole is carved as a figure of an orca whale, and it is intended to be displayed horizontally, rather than in the vertical orientation of many totem poles in Pacific Northwest Indigenous contexts (Figure 3.3).

Figure 3.3. June 12, 2019: The Tokitae Totem Pole and participants at the Totem Pole Journey event at the Puyallup Reservation.

The Tokitae totem pole is approximately sixteen feet long. Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut herself is about twenty feet in length. The Tokitae pole includes figures of salmon carved along the side of the whale's body, as well as the figure of a human kneeling in prayer. A

child kneels upon the whale's back, just behind the dorsal fin. As noted above, the figure of the child was made in honor of Bailey, the girl who shared Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's psychic call for help to go home. The image of the whale rider is also a cultural reference. The Tokitae figure is painted black with striking blue, red, and white accents. The figure of the whale rider is painted brown with long black hair. While influenced by Lummi cultural symbols and Northwest Indigenous art styles, the totem poles are carved in Jewell and Doug James's distinctive styles.

Two carved seals accompany the Tokitae totem pole. During the totem pole journeys, the seals are placed alongside the Tokitae figure. When the pole is not on a truck, the seals are designed to support the Tokitae figure as a base upon which the whale is placed.

Event Locations and Their Significance to the Campaign

The TPJ event locations and activities are chosen through a combination of outreach to local contacts from the TPJ team and invitation from local hosts. The TPJ network has grown since the first tour in 2002. The tours' routes and connections evolve organically according to these networks of relationships. For example, Kurt Russo (2021) recalls that the TPJ team met someone at a gas station in Ohio on the way to deliver the first healing pole to New York in 2002. The person worked as an airline steward and asked whether the TPJ team would come to the September 11th crash site in Pennsylvania. Jewell promised to carve a totem pole in honor of the victims there and returned with a new carving in 2003, which led to a request for a totem pole to be delivered to the Pentagon in 2004. The stories of the TPJ journeys since then have

unwound in a similarly organic fashion. The primary TPJ routes are strategically selected for each TPJ campaign based on the campaign's primary focus.

In 2019, the West Coast TPJ events traced a parallel land route from the southern edge of the Southern Resident killer whales' range in the Pacific Ocean north to their resident home in the Salish Sea (Marine Mammal Commission n.d.). The speakers at each event shared stories of local connections to the killer whales, and they also invited the TPJ team and event participants to learn about and participate in local initiatives. As in previous tours, the 2019 TPJ events were held in a variety of locations, most of which included public, outdoor, urban spaces. I use the term *urban* inclusively here to include a public city park along the shores of Penn Cove in the small town of Coupeville, Washington, as well as a more intensive urban setting of the municipal building and urban plaza in Van Nuys, California.

In 2019, events for the West Coast portion of the Totem Pole Journey were held at the following urban locations:

- a paved, urban plaza outside the city municipal building in Van Nuys, California (which included a formal presentation to the city council inside the municipal building);
- a university arboretum with an outdoor stage high on a hill overlooking the city at the University of California Irvine;
- a community center building and parking lot in the small community of Topanga, California (just north of Los Angeles);
- an outdoor pavilion in the East Garden and an indoor presentation area at the California Academy of Sciences in San Francisco, California;

- the parking lot and lecture hall in the Ecotrust Building in downtown Portland, Oregon;
- a large open field and gravel parking lot on newly recovered Puyallup tribal reservation land along the shores of Puget Sound just north of Tacoma, Washington;
- a downtown city street outside the Whatcom Museum (Old City Hall) that had been blocked off for the event and in the building's lecture hall in Bellingham, Washington;
- the outdoor stage and lawn of the Coupeville Town Park along the shores of Penn Cove in Coupeville, Washington; and
- inside and outside the PACCAR Pavilion at the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park in downtown Seattle.

As noted, most of the 2019 events included an indoor portion of the program. The Tokitae totem pole remained on the large truck bed outside during the events. Only the San Francisco event at the Academy of Sciences required admission to the Academy in order to participate. All other TPJ events were free and open to the public. Although all events were held on the traditional territories of Indigenous peoples of the continent, only one event was held on reservation land. The Puyallup tribe hosted the TPJ on their tribal reservation land on the shores of the Salish Sea near Tacoma, Washington, and that event was also open to nontribal members and the broader public.

The events' locations and programming held various symbolic and historic significance for the TPJ campaign to bring Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut home. Before making the return journey from Florida, the TPJ team held ceremonies in Miami in honor of

Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. The team held an event on the beach near the Miami Seaquarium, followed by a group procession to the front of the Seaquarium (Figure 3.4). The team also visited Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut in her tank at the Miami Seaquarium. The team's journey along the West Coast along the Southern Resident killer whales' ocean territories brought attention to the physical habitat of the killer whales. Additionally, the TPJ leaders made clear that the journey was also a process of spiritually aiding Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut in her return home.

Figure 3.4. May 2019: A Totem Pole Journey demonstration for Tokitae's release outside the Miami Seaquarium where the orca Tokitae has been held in captivity since 1970. Photo by the Totem Pole Journey.

Other events the broader struggles of the Southern Resident killer whales within the Salish Sea. The event in Coupeville, Washington, was held at a city park near Penn Cove, the site of the 1970 orca capture and killing, during which Tokitae and many other orcas were abducted or died in the struggle. Many people present at the TPJ event had

witnessed the capture and gave testimonials, including their memories of the horrible cries the orcas made as they were trapped in sea pens and separated from their families. As the story goes, the Southern Resident killer whale pods have never since returned to Penn Cove. The Coupeville location provided an opportunity for those who lived in the area to remember and to learn about the current efforts to secure the return of the last surviving orca who was captured that day.

While the Coupeville, Washington, event location near the site of the orca capture was directly connected to the 2019 TPJ campaign, even those sites with less immediately apparent connections demonstrated the extensive relationality within the TPJ campaign and the overall approach. For example, I attended the Van Nuys, California, event with little awareness of the human or orca context of the region. I quickly learned from one of the speakers that the ocean near Los Angeles is the southern extent of the range of the Southern Resident killer whales of the San Juan Islands. The speaker also referenced the historic relationships of the coastal peoples from Washington to Southern California.

Analysis of the Case Study

The following sections of the chapter develop the conceptual cartography presented in Chapter I. In the following sections, I analyze the key questions of the dissertation through the TPJ project. I employ my auto, material, ethnographical approach and some theoretical tools of contemporary North American Indigenous philosophies to address the following key questions:

1. What are the roles of everyday urban places and material artifacts in the formation of communities of solidarity?

2. How does the temporary nature of participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms influence the development of solidarity that addresses ongoing settler-colonial legacies?
3. How do Indigenous philosophies account for the role of place, personhood, and nonhuman agency in the co-production of space and subjectivities?

What are the Roles of Everyday Urban Places and Material Artifacts in the Formation of Communities of Solidarity?

In this dissertation, I propose that everyday urban places, urban design artifacts, and other biotic and nonbiotic entities of the more-than-human world are important elements in the formation of communities of solidarity. I also propose that the concepts of solidarity should be expanded to include relational engagements with the more-than-human world. The TPJ's pluriversal approaches engage these propositions in several ways:

1. TPJ events in outdoor, public, urban places attract passersby and invite participation from people both familiar and unfamiliar with the campaigns.
2. The totem pole functions both as a work of art and an artifact for ceremonial and sensorial engagement through which people are brought together in physical proximity and in collective contemplation and celebration.
3. TPJ campaigns are intended to raise awareness of crucial issues confronting the more-than-human world. The events include recognition of the lands on which events are held, and the events present a relational ontology and the ethics of interdependence with the more-than-human world.

TPJ Events in Outdoor, Public, Urban Places Attract Passersby and Invite Participation from People Both Familiar and Unfamiliar with the Campaigns

As an object out of place, the totem pole instigates engagement in and with urban spaces. TPJ events engage outdoor, public, urban places. Urban places are activated through the interactions of the TPJ events. TPJ events include spontaneity by necessity, in that people are often passing by on their way elsewhere and spontaneously choose to participate. They also include spontaneity by design, in that the event agendas are typically somewhat open-ended to allow for extemporaneous prayer, speaking, and singing from the project leaders, as well as open-ended invitations for audience members to share their stories.

The outdoor, urban, public spaces of the events invite passersby to either casually observe or actively participate in the programming. People pass by and through event locations on their way somewhere else. My first moment at the first event in Van Nuys, California, included an encounter with a woman dressed in business clothes crossing the street who saw me taking photos of the truck as it arrived at the plaza (Figure 3.5). I had yet to even introduce myself to the TPJ team, but the large camera I was holding made me part of the spectacle. The woman asked me what was happening as Doug worked to navigate the truck and totem pole through the gated entrance area along a busy street onto the municipal plaza. She stood and watched in curiosity for a few minutes before continuing on her way. This moment provided this woman with an unexpected encounter with a totem pole in downtown Los Angeles.

The TPJ events transfigure everyday, urban spaces—temporarily—into Indigenous ceremonial spaces. This transfiguration is accomplished materially, through

the placement of the totem pole and other artifacts, including instruments such as drums, rattles, and flutes, as well as other art pieces that are shared by participants. Participants sometimes wear their traditional Indigenous clothing. The assemblage of groups of humans of various Indigenous and non-Indigenous heritages gathered with a collective ceremonial intention also creates the ceremonial spaces.

3.5. June 7, 2019: The Tokitae Totem Pole outside the municipal building in Van Nuys, California.

The transfiguration is also accomplished sensorially, through the ceremonial sounds of prayer, chanting, singing, drumming, and instruments playing. Part of this sensorial transfiguration comes from moments of silence between the other elements of the events, including those that are orchestrated by the project leaders and those that emerge from the collective moment.

The sensorial transfiguration is also accomplished through scent, in that burning sage and incense expand the boundaries of the ceremonial space sometimes several blocks away. For example, in 2017, I parked my car several blocks away from the location of the TPJ event in Seattle. Although I had the directions to the event on my smartphone, it was the sharp scent of sage burning that led me the last few blocks to the street outside of the church where the event was held. As I got closer, I could hear drumming. I put my phone away, breathed in the deepening scents, and followed my nose to the church.

There is also a haptic element of the spatial transfiguration. Participants are asked to gather around the totem pole, which requires people to come into physical contact with each other by standing shoulder-to-shoulder and arranging themselves so that elders, children, and those in wheelchairs are placed at the front of the group. Additionally, during prayers and chants, the project leaders and allies ask participants to place their hands on the totem pole or raise their hand up in the air in a gesture of prayer and thanksgiving. Those who are not close enough to reach the pole itself then place their hands on the backs and shoulders of the people in front of them.

The Totem Pole is Presented as a Work of Art and an Artifact for Ceremonial and Sensorial Engagement Through Which People are Brought Together in Physical Proximity and in Collective Contemplation, Ceremony, and Celebration.

The totem poles are central elements of the TPJ events. Project leaders refer to the totem poles as symbols of collective care. At times, but not always, the totem poles are described as carrying the energy and prayers of those who put their hands on it (Lane and Jones 2017). Other times, Doug James and other project leaders caution that the totem

pole is "just a piece of wood," but they explain that the sacred is created through people coming together in cere,pmgy.

The totem pole lying on a truck bed or trailer creates a visually striking element that draws in passersby. While rallies, outdoor lectures, and demonstrations all bring humans together in public spaces, the TPJ project emphasizes material elements, sensory connection, and affective experience, by way of the following sensory elements:

- visual and haptic/tactile connection with the totem poles;
- the auditory effects of chanting, singing, drumming, and speaking in multiple languages;
- smells of burning sage in ceremony;
- alimentary connection through shared food; and
- the affective impacts of participating in spiritual ceremonies of various traditions, as well as the collective impact of the group activity of placing hands on the totem pole.

Event participants are encouraged to interact with the totem poles and climb on the trailer or truck bed to see and touch the poles. Through these material, haptic, visual, and affective events, the TPJ events bring a Lummi perspective materially and socially into the everyday, public, built environment of American towns and cities.

Each event includes a ceremony during which participants are invited to send their "good wishes" or "prayers" into the pole. Prayers, songs, and ceremonies from various traditions are shared. Spiritual leaders from various faith traditions in the community are often asked to lead prayers while participants gather around the pole.

Elected officials, tribal leaders, and NGO representatives deliver presentations to brief participants on various campaigns and make calls to action.

The emotion present during the ceremonies is palpable. Participants are often moved to tears while placing their hands on the poles. After the group prayers have ended, groups will maintain a collective, contemplative attitude as individuals take turns putting their hands on and delivering their individual prayers to the poles.

TPJ Campaigns are Intended to Raise Awareness of Crucial Issues Confronting the More-Than-Human World. They Include Recognition of the Lands on Which Events are Held, and the Events Present a Relational Ontology and an Ethics of Interdependence with the More-Than-Human World

The TPJ team and local hosts emphasize the local context and acknowledge and honor the local place of each event. These kinds of acknowledgements include the immediate location and context, as well as more formal explanation of the local place during the speaking presentation portions of events. For instance, at the urban plaza outside the Van Nuys City Hall, Freddie Lane made note of the several hummingbirds flitting about in the small, lush garden planted along a building. Freddie noted that the hummingbirds have a special spiritual relationship with the Lummi and that their presence was an auspicious sign. Later, during a more structured portion of the outdoor program, Tom (name changed to maintain confidentiality), a City of Los Angeles staffer who had organized the TPJ event, called attention to the hummingbirds and spoke about the garden that had been newly installed in the plaza as a showcase of the City's efforts to restore nonhuman habitat in the city. This small example demonstrates the importance of specific places to the project and the humans involved. They also model the relationships

that the humans of each region maintain with the nonhuman biotic and nonbiotic entities of the places. The verbal presentations and the ceremonies of the events frame the specific—pluriversal—relationships that the local hosts engage in with the local places and the nonhuman world.

As noted in the introductory sections of this chapter, the 2019 TPJ journey shared a Lummi worldview of orcas as relatives who live under the water. While this sort of relationship can evoke sentiments of care from people of different cultural traditions, the Lummi advocates for Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut make clear that the nature of the relationships of Lummi people with the orcas as relatives is a matter of spiritual sovereignty. It is the tribe's sovereign right to interact—and, when necessary, intervene—on behalf of the orcas.

The implications of this sovereign right were made clear at a press conference to announce the Lummi-led Salish Sea Campaign as part of the TPJ event at the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park. In response to a question from a reporter asking whether Lummi Nation had been working with the National Oceanic and Atmospheric Administration on their three-point plan to protect orcas, which includes ceremonial feeding, as well as a plan to establish feeding stations, Lummi tribal member and Office of Treaty and Sovereignty Protection representative Raynell Morris stated,

> We have had a conversation with NOAA, recently and shared our vision from Lummi Nation as to our spiritual and cultural right to exercise this right. "qwel hol mechen" [Lummi term for orcas, meaning *relatives under the sea*] is a relative. We don't need permission to feed our starving relatives. But we certainly

appreciate the opportunity to share with them what the Lummi vision is and why and what it would look like (Morris 2019)

With this statement, Raynell Morris politely made two important points clear to the reporter and everyone listening: (1) the orcas are people, relatives, and (2) Lummi Nation negotiates with the U.S. government and its agencies, including NOAA, on a sovereign-to-sovereign basis.

How Does the Temporary Nature of Participatory, Informal, Temporary Urbanisms Influence the Development of Solidarity that Addresses Ongoing Settler-Colonial Legacies?

Undecided Space and Relational Time

As discussed, the TPJ brings pluriversal perspectives together in everyday urban spaces. The event programming includes speakers, ceremonies, music, and dancing from multiple cultural, political, and spiritual perspectives. In addition, space is made for unprogrammed and unplanned activities, including impromptu music, sage and incense burning, guest speakers, and informal conversations.

In addition to the unexpected encounters that events in public spaces inherently produce, the TPJ events intentionally open *liminal spaces*. As Kurt Russo often notes (2020, 2021), the TPJ events produce *undecided space*, which is temporal and physical space in which various experiences can and do emerge. The temporary and ceremonial formats of the TPJ events, according to Kurt Russo (2021) are an invocation and an invitation for emergence. The invocation comes through ceremonies, prayers, songs, and speeches, as well as through the more mundane formatting decisions to allow plenty of unscheduled or unprogrammed time at each event.

For instance, at the event in Van Nuys, after the truck was finally allowed past the gates, we stood on the plaza on a sunny morning as people slowly arrived and gathered. After the formal presentation to the City Council, we returned outside to the totem pole, where several people spoke at a podium to the small group that had gathered. The informality of the outdoor portion of the event encouraged heartfelt and spontaneous commentary. In addition to the planned speakers, Freddie Lane invited anyone who wished to speak to come up to the podium and share their story. After the speakers concluded, people walked around, enjoying the time together, observing and touching the totem pole, and chatting informally to get to know each other. Kurt Russo notes that this unprogrammed space and time that is part of each TPJ event is a sort of *relational time* (pers. comm., April 2021). The undecided space and relational time are a crucial part of the impact that these events have on participants.

Sovereign-to-Sovereign Solidarity

The 2019 TPJ events began with an acknowledgement by one of the project leaders of the event's location within particular Indigenous tribal territories. When representatives from local Indigenous tribes were present at an event, the TPJ leaders made a formal request for permission from those representatives to travel through those tribes' territories. For example, at the final TPJ event in Seattle, which took place at the Seattle Art Museum's Olympic Sculpture Park in downtown Seattle overlooking Puget Sound, Freddie Lane started the formal program by asking permission from Duwamish tribal member Ken Workman. Ken Workman is the great-great-great-great-grandson of Chief Si'ahl (Seattle), for whom the city is named. In a booming voice that carried over the crowd and the city noises, Workman greeted the TPJ team and the audience of about

100 people, first in Duwamish, then English, and then in the languages of many of the coastal peoples of the Pacific Northwest.

> (Speaking in Duwamish—unclear recording) This is the language that Chief Seattle spoke just the other day when he stood on these shores and he said to the people (Speaking in Duwamish) which simply means, "come ashore, my friends, onto this land of the Duwamish." And then he said, (speaking in Duwamish) "I am Si'ahl (Seattle) of the Duwamish and Suquamish." And when you look across the bay right over there is the Suquamish village and you're standing right here on the mouth of the Duwamish River on Duwamish lands. And my name is Workman (speaking in Duwamish). I am Workman of the Duwamish tribe (speaking in Duwamish), the great-great-great-great grandson of Chief Seattle. And so, just like when my grandfather stood on those shores and he welcomed people to this land, we continue to do that today.
>
> But it's also important that we recognize the hard work that goes on here today. And so, we say to our Tlingit friends (speaking Tlingit language) our Tlingit friends from Alaska, because they live here, too. To the Haida, who live 300 miles south of the Tlingit, we (speaking Haida) and to their neighbors 100 miles east of them (unclear). Further south on Vancouver Island we use the word (unclear) this word means thank you and good to know you. And the Lummi, the Saaniich, we say (Hyshqe, Hyshqe siam). It means thank you, blessings. Just north (unclear) Suquamish, Duwamish, Snoqualmie, Muckleshoot, Puyullap, (unclear). We...say...Hyshqe. All of these words were here. And we say (unclear) to our

friends on the Columbia River, our Chinookan friends. They all mean the same thing.

And so, we say to our brothers (addressing the TPJ team) (Speaking Duwamish), which is thanking my brothers, for the work that they're doing taking Tokitae, this representation of Tokitae, across this country and showing everybody who we are and the meaning of the people that live out here in our salt water (word in another language, unclear). (same word) is this word that we use for orca, for black fish. And so, we say, hyshqe siam. And so today I say to you, just like my grandfather said, a hundred and sixty-eight years ago, (speaking Duwamish). Bring your canoe to shore onto this land. The sky canoes, the land canoes, the big canoes out in the bay. You're welcome here. (speaking Duwamish). This word (unclear) means invitation and welcome. And so, we continue to say this today. So, we say (speaking Duwamish), which is simply welcome everybody onto this land of the Duwamish. Thank you.

Workman's greeting demonstrated the ongoing Indigenous presence in the very place of the event, as well as throughout the vast region of the Pacific Northwest. The greeting also placed the event into historical context by emphasizing that Workman's ancestors were here to welcome European newcomers 168 years ago. The greeting also recognized the presence of Indigenous peoples from throughout the region who currently live in Seattle. Lastly, it established a relationship of solidarity with the TPJ leaders as "brothers" in their work to return Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut to her home waters.

From Erasure to Resurgence

Tuck and Yang (2012) argue that “urban land (indeed all land) is Native land” (23). The settler-colonial conditions of the United States, however, are all but invisible for many residents of contemporary American cities. Ken Workman’s welcome at the TPJ event on the shores of Puget Sound re-centered the city of Seattle as a place that has emerged within a vast network of Indigenous territories and cross-cultural relationships. There was never *terra nullius*—empty land—in Seattle. Workman’s welcome made it clear to all present that Seattle was a new addition to an already full and vital world of human and more-than-human relationships.

The TPJ supports myriad local Indigenous resurgence movements. For example, at the California Academy of Sciences event in San Francisco, Sogorea Te’ Land Trust[7] founder Corrina Gould spoke passionately about their efforts to re-establish cultural practices and reclaim traditional lands in the region. The TPJ team works in solidarity to amplify this ongoing work toward resurgence through sovereign-to-sovereign solidarity, as well as solidarity across native and nonnative communities.

Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2021) argues for Indigenous communities to focus on Indigenous resurgence, rather than reconciliation with dominant settler governments and cultures. Simpson’s arguments align with those of Sogorea Te’ Land Trust in that their priorities are to first and foremost reclaim cultural practices, traditional territories, and sovereign-to-sovereign solidarity with other tribal communities. Alliances with settler and migrant groups are not opposed, but they are pursued secondarily to these

[7] https://sogoreate-landtrust.org/

priorities. For Simpson and Gould, Indigenous resurgence takes place—and, I would suggest, makes place—in urban settings.

Simpson's (2011) earlier book, *Dancing on Our Turtle's Back*, includes an account of her experience participating in a march through city streets. Simpson emphasizes the Indigenous foundations of the city by referring to it by its Indigenous name, Nogojiwanong, only secondarily denoting the place as Petersboro, Ontario, Canada. Simpson (2011) writes of walking in the procession, with her community members, through city streets where "we had all indirectly, or directly, experience the violence of colonialism, dispossession and desperation at one time or another. Our drummers provided the heartbeat; our singers provided the prayer" (11). For Simpson (2011), this procession was an act of resurgence. Simpson argues that these kinds of acts can "transform our land and our city into a decolonized space and a place of resurgence, even if it is only for a brief amount of time" (11).

Simpson's account offers an Indigenous person's perspective on the possibility for transformation of urban space in settler-colonial North America. Her story shows how momentary, temporary activities in urban space can have transformative consequences beyond the particular time and space of the event. Simpson argues that acts of resurgence can take place at multiple spatial and temporal scales. In addition to resistance as protest and political movements, individual and family actions to respect and perpetuate one's culture are also important. Simpson shares that even simple, momentary acts have an impact:

> From my perspective as a Nishnaabewe, whenever one throws a stone into the lake with intent, commitment, and vision, the intricate order or spiritual world

> mobilizes to provide support and open doors. The emergent nature of Nishnaabeg mobilization, resistance, and resurgence means that it is impossible to predict which stones will cascade through time and space, producing impacts, shifts, and transformations. (Simpson 2011, 102)

For Simpson, small acts are often the start and continuation of Indigenous mobilization (102).

The TPJ also demonstrates the ripple or cascade effects of small and momentary acts and events. These temporary events can instigate larger political action, cultivate cultural resurgence, and in and of themselves, they can help to heal ongoing and past traumas. The momentary events, for both Simpson and the TPJ, are only one of many necessary approaches.

Simpson (2011) diverges from the TPJ efforts to build solidarity across native and nonnative communities, calling on Indigenous nations to focus inward on restoring their own structures and systems of life, rather than outward on political and legal fights against settler states. Simpson argues that it is a waste of energy for Indigenous peoples in Canada to struggle for state recognition and decolonization, given the seeming absence of political will within the Canadian government. For Simpson, the priority is to support the resurgence of Nishnaabeg ways of life and being in the world. In contrast, the TPJ prioritizes Indigenous-led efforts, yet it also relies on alliances with nonnative groups and individuals.

A Pluriverse is not a Uni-Verse

While the TPJ and local partners emphasize their commitment to working together despite their differences, it should be clear that this solidarity does not include

attempts to minimize or gloss over points of disagreement or divergence with either tribal or non-tribal communities. At the TPJ event hosted by the Puyallup tribe, the event MC—a woman of settler heritage involved with local labor unions—made a statement about removing the rhetoric of war from discussions. One of the TPJ leaders made a (lighthearted) corrective when he took the microphone, noting that area tribes had been at war with each other for centuries.

At that same event, TPJ leaders and speakers from the nonprofit organization The Orca Network emphasized the intelligence of orcas, their familial cultures and pod-centered lifeways, and their cultural significance to the Lummi as relatives under the water. In contrast to this focus on the ethical importance of valuing nonhuman life, a Puyallup elder spoke at length about the historical and cultural significance of seals as food sources for the Puyallup people. Her argument was that the ban on seal hunting has contributed to the decline of local salmon populations due to the overpopulations of seals. Her point was that the arguments for hunting one type of marine mammal were made alongside arguments for the ethical importance of protecting another type of marine mammal. Space was made for these voices, and while it was clear that various participants deeply disagreed with each other, the event carried on with shared food, presentations, and music.

How do Indigenous Philosophies Account for the Role of Place, Personhood, and Nonhuman Agency in the Co-Production of Space and Subjectivities?

My goal with this research is to bring place—specifically, everyday, urban places—into accounts of how solidarity forms across human and nonhuman communities. Doing so requires interrogating existing concepts of place itself. As I

described in Chapter I, place can be conceived as a coordinate location. Place, however, is not only the location at which human and nonhuman events occur. A place includes land, but a place is more than only the sands, clays, soils, and stones that form the land, ground, or substrate on or in which human and nonhuman activities occur. Places include waters and skies, and they are produced by Earth systems and processes, as well as human and nonhuman life. They can be imbued with human cultural significance. A place, even within the dominant culture's everyday understanding, is produced by the interactions and interrelationships of a variety of kinds of things, including—but not exclusively—lands. Urban places further complicate concepts of place, in that—within the dominant Euro-Western culture—they are conceived of as places made by humans even while Earth forces of weathering, hydrology, carbon and nitrogen cycling, nonhuman life, and the like pervade all urban locations.

Vanessa Watts (2017) and other Indigenous scholars, including Richard Atleo (2011), Thomas Norton Smith (2014), Robin Kimmerer (2013, 2017), Vine Deloria, Jr. (1999a, 1999b, 2003, 2012), and Deloria and Wildcat (2001), demonstrate that the everyday understanding of place within the dominant Euro-Western culture is both culturally embedded and inaccurate within Indigenous traditions. Watts (2017) presents the Haudenosaunee concept of land through the origin story of Sky Woman. According to Watts (2013), this story should be understood as an account of actual events that occurred, not as a myth (21). Sky Woman fell through a hole in the sky and was saved from crashing by birds, who saw that she could not fly and helped her slowly down to the water, where Turtle emerged and allowed her to rest on his shell, as Sky Woman had no "water legs" (21).

This origin story situates humans as newcomers to a world already populated with societies of (nonhuman) persons. As newcomers, humans are dependent on the help of others to survive (Watts 2017, 25). Sky Woman's arrival is met immediately with assistance from the inhabitants of Earth. She works together with these earthly inhabitants to create land, which is formed from the bodies of Sky Woman and Turtle, as well as the mud that Otter brings up from the bottom of the sea. The land is not only something that allows for Sky Woman's existence, but it is literally a part of Sky Woman. Watts' presentation of Indigenous ontologies centers around the concept of Place-Thought. According to Watts, the story of Sky Woman describes a particular ontology that recognizes agential capacity in the nonhuman and nonbiotic world, as described in this passage:

> …a theoretical understanding of the world via a physical embodiment—Place-Thought. Place-Thought is the non-distinctive space where place and thought were never separated because they never could or can be separated. Place-Thought is based upon the premise that land is alive and thinking and the humans and non-humans derive agency through the extensions of these thoughts. (21)

Watts conveys an Indigenous ontology in which all "elements of nature possess agency, and this agency is not limited to innate action or causal relationships" (23). For Watts, agential capacities include more than just being alive or acting; they include the capacity for thought, desire, contemplation, and will.

Watts (2017) also adds the point that "all living things contain spirit" to her account of what it means to be animate, alive, and have agency (23). The land in this account is female, thinking, and alive (21, 25, 27). Humans are made from the land; as

Watts describes, “our flesh is literally an extension of soil” (27). Therefore, human agency is more accurately conceived as the expression of Place-Thought, of the land, which comes through humans themselves as an extension of the land. This story situates the human subject as inherently interconnected with, dependent upon, and ultimately responsible for the myriad Earth others who make human life possible (21). Crucial to Watts’s account is a concept of what it means to be alive that extends beyond biotic entities and a concept of what it means to be a person that extends beyond humans.

Vine Deloria, Jr.’s accounts of land and place are generally in alignment with those of Watts. While Watts focuses specifically on the nature of place within a Haudenosaunee ontology, Deloria synthesizes various North American Indigenous ontologies and clarifies the variety of sorts of interactions and interrelationships through which places are formed. Both Watts’s and Deloria’s accounts provide a means by which to conceive place as a collaborator in the production of communities of solidarity, rather than place as a backdrop against which human and nonhuman communities engage. I have written elsewhere (Meier 2021) about Deloria’s accounts of land and place. Here, I briefly summarize these accounts insofar as they provide an important foundation for conceptualizing urban places.

Deloria distinguishes between the concepts of land and place, which he discusses often across his many texts. His use of these terms varies according to topic and audience; however, land is not synonymous with place, nor is land only a sort of substrate. Rather, land is an active element in the creation of place. As I introduced in Chapter II, Deloria’s and other Indigenous accounts recognize that land can and does communicate with people. Because lands are diverse and varied, they communicate in

diverse and varied ways. Deloria (2003) proposes that various religions have developed through the specific form of communications that specific groups of people have received from specific lands (146). Deloria (1999a) also uses the term land to refer to the geographical territories of various peoples, as well as in a technical sense when referring to the legal claims various Native American tribes make for a specific region of the Earth (20–42).

For Deloria, a place is made of land and other entities that can and do communicate. As such, there is emergent potential in place. As I have discussed elsewhere (Meier 2021), Deloria articulates the emergent potential of place in several texts as part of a broader explanation of the various sorts of sacred places. Noting that the categorization is an oversimplification, Deloria nonetheless distinguishes four ways in which places are considered sacred in his 1972 and 1999 books, *God is Red* and *For This Land*. One of these four kinds of sacred places is the possibility of the emergence of new, sacred places. The possibility for new sacred places is a function of the living, expressive nature of place. In Deloria's account, a place has a communicative capacity that extends to humans and nonhumans. This communicative capacity is made possible by the intelligent energy that pervades the entire universe, including things that are typically considered inanimate entities within dominant Euro-Western culture. According to Deloria (2003), "all inanimate entities have spirit and personality so that the mountains, rivers, waterfalls, even the continents and the earth itself have intelligence, knowledge, and the ability to communicate ideas" (151). Therefore, places are active agents with whom reciprocal relations exist with other agential entities, including plants, animals, stones, and humans.

Deloria's (2001) concept of place is further elucidated in *Power and Place: Indian Education in America*, co-authored with Daniel Wildcat. In this text, Deloria presents a concept of place defined as "the relationship of things to each other" (23). For these authors, place is created by and through relationships. This relationship is not linear, however, and place also creates the entities that exist in relation to each other. Deloria argues that "power and place produce personality" (23). This means that power—also defined as life force or universal energy—combined with place produces the entities of the Earth and the rest of the universe.

While Deloria ([1970] 2007) refers to cities in the contemporary United States as the "artificial universe," his critique is targeted primarily at the alienation from place that is the norm in cities, rather than the absence of this living, universal energy. Deloria expresses concerns that contemporary forms of urban development and technology and associated sensorial disruptions separate humans from their relationships with place.

Scott Pratt (2006) characterizes Deloria's metaphysical accounts as an agent ontology. The agent ontology presented by Deloria allows for the possibilities of urban space transfiguration, which I suggest are produced through the ceremonial TPJ events. The living and communicative nature of place, land, and other nonhuman entities allows for the possibility of new sorts of places to emerge. As noted above, Deloria describes the fourth kind of sacred place as the possibility for the emergence of new sorts of sacred places. The TPJ events intentionally bring Indigenous ceremonial perspectives to everyday urban spaces. Humans from various traditions gather and participate in these ceremonial events. The events necessarily produce new relationships between power and

place. I suggest that these new relationships also have the potential to consist of new sorts of relationships, including new sorts of solidarities.

As I introduced in Chapter II, part of the challenge for people from Euro-Western cultures in developing an awareness of these sorts of relational ontologies is a lack of confidence in direct experience. Despite the dominant perspectives that demand replicability and universalizability in order to validate experience, Deloria argues that direct, personal experience is a valid form of knowledge acquisition. Deloria (1999b) states, "Indians knew the universe is alive because they experienced it in everything" (49). These experiences were not expected to be replicable or universalizable; however, they were understood to be both personal and reliable sources of information about the nature of reality.

The TPJ's ceremonial activities in everyday urban places create momentary introductions for people from various cultural backgrounds to a particular Lummi worldview which—like the ontology presented by Deloria—recognizes an intelligent, communicative, energetic nature of existence. In this sense, the TPJ events are experiments in everyday urban spaces. These experiments bring people from various backgrounds together to test out experience that is grounded in particular ontologies. These experiments also determine what sorts of solidarities form across ontological differences.

Ontological difference—that is, the pluriverse—is celebrated in the TPJ events. While there is always work around a common goal, such as the campaign to free Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut or to stop a coal port, the organizing principle is about unity across difference. For instance, representatives of large environmental NGOs such as the Sierra

Club often speak and participate in events alongside tribal ceremonialists and tribal elected officials. While the environmental NGOs' primary goals are usually related to conservation and economic concerns, NGO staffers participate in the Indigenous-led ceremonial components of the events. Similarly, the TPJ leaders recognize and support the importance of the NGOs' agendas. The point here is that there is an experiential and participatory element of the events in which various factions become participants in divergent ontologies. Through these interactions, there are opportunities for new kinds of relationships to emerge.

Deloria also emphasizes the role of humans as participants in the emergent and relational qualities of place. Deloria (1999b) argues, "We are, in the truest sense possible, creators or co-creators with the higher powers, and what we do has immediate importance for the rest of the universe" (47). Deloria emphasizes that all entities have a responsibility to participate in this ongoing creation. The TPJ events support participants in becoming co-creators—along with urban places. The TPJ's activities offer an opportunity for otherwise alienated urban dwellers to become participants in the production of urban spaces, albeit temporarily.

Closing Notes: A Figuration of Undecided, Emergent Space

As I previously discussed, the 2019 TPJ events included encounters across different sorts of worldviews and corresponding concepts of place, more-than-human relationships, and solidarity. For example, at each event, TPJ project leaders presented their story of how and why they are working to free Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut. By sharing their story, the TPJ project leaders also shared a particular worldview or ontology within which an understanding of self or subjectivity is embedded.

The project leaders are keenly aware that their individual and Lummi cultural perspectives differ from those of the dominant settler-colonial culture. They also clearly identify how their cultural and individual relationships with orca and other whales differ from those of other Indigenous cultures. In recognition of the variety of worldviews, the TPJ leaders make efforts to explain themselves and their perspectives in a translational sort of way. For example, at the beginning of this chapter, as Doug told the story of how they learned of Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut, he made an effort to explain that the whales "are perfectly capable of reaching out." Had he been speaking in another context, it may not have been necessary to include that explanation of how or why Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut's story is to be taken seriously. The way in which Doug presented the story of Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut to the university class is one of many examples in which the TPJ leaders are willing to speak and work across cultures.

As described by the TPJ project leaders, the 2019 TPJ campaign to free Sk'aliCh'elh-tenaut from captivity was based on TPJ leaders' sense of *sacred obligation* to help their relative under the water. Doug James simply explains, "It's our sacred obligation to do all that we can do and make something right" (Doug James, Snake River Livestream, July 15, 2021). The concept of sacred obligation presents a human subject in relation to the rest of the world with a set of corresponding duties to the world. One might contrast this concept of a self as defined by one's duties to human and nonhuman others with another notion of the subject as a rational individual driven by desires and endowed with unalienable rights. The Lummi understand orcas as nonhuman persons, as relatives who live under the water. There are many Lummi cultural stories of relationships with orcas, as well as endless stories of orcas' interactions with humans in the present day.

As discussed, the TPJ events incorporate multiple ontologies that are represented by a variety of spiritual and cultural traditions. The multiplicity of perspectives makes space for people to share insights and experiences that are less likely to be accepted in other group circumstances. For example, the day after the formal presentation to the Lose Angeele city council, I spoke with Tom, the City of Los Angeles employee who had organized the city event, at the Topanga Community Center TPJ event. Tom lives near Topanga and attended the event there out of personal interest. Tom told me his story of what he described as a spiritual encounter. Hiking with his father in the hills outside of the city, he heard a voice that spoke of a white buffalo that had been born. This encounter changed Tom's life and led him to leave his career as a filmmaker to start working on a variety of environmental initiatives, including a seemingly mundane effort to ban plastic bags, which led him eventually to his high-level position with the city, which led to his efforts to support the TPJ, which led to the event in the plaza that day in June. The point here is to note that the transfiguration of the municipal plaza through the TPJ event created a sort of undecided space in which Tom—a White American man and representative of the settler-colonial government—could share his own personal story of communication with the more-than-human world. Together, but all very differently, the TPJ leaders, the nonprofit advocates, everyday urban dwellers, elected officials, and tribal leaders from a variety of traditions made—for a moment—a new sort of relational time and space.

In his account of various sorts of sacred places, Vine Deloria, Jr., emphasizes the potential for emergence *from* and *with* any place. As I discussed in Chapter II, Deloria defines a place as the product of power and personality coming together. Because the

power that underlies the universe is intelligent, communicative, and alive, there is always the potential for what Deloria calls “new revelations” to emerge. If not, the universe would be dead. The participatory, informal, temporary, urban TPJ activities demonstrate this potential for emergence. As an object out of place, the totem pole instigates engagement in and with urban spaces (Figure 3.6).

Figure 3.6. June 15, 2019: A Lummi tribal ceremonialist with the Tokitae Totem Pole at the Totem Pole Journey event at the Seattle Art Museum Olympic Sculpture Park in Seattle, Washington.

CHAPTER IV. BUILDING THE UNCERTAIN SPACES OF GERMANY'S CITIZEN-REFUGEE COMMUNITIES—THE KITCHEN ON THE RUN

Introduction

This chapter analyzes the Kitchen on the Run (KOTR) as a temporary, participatory, urban intervention. I focus on the role of design artifacts, material practices, and everyday urban places in how communities of solidarity form through the project. The chapter draws primarily from my participatory field research with the KOTR project in Rendsburg, Germany, in 2019. My analysis is also based on research I undertook as part of the Portland Urban Architecture Research Lab (PUARL) from 2015 to 2018, including preliminary field research I completed in four German communities in 2016.

In the following pages, I provide a summary of my research methods for this case study. I then provide an overview of the German refugee integration context within which the KOTR project developed. I include a brief history of the KOTR project, a description of the shipping container kitchen, and a synopsis of the 2019 summer tour. In the second half of the chapter, I analyze the project through the specific questions of this dissertation. To maintain the confidentiality and privacy of research participants, I use pseudonyms to refer to interviewees, KOTR participants, and KOTR staff.

Research Methods for the Kitchen on the Run Case Study

2015–2018: Preliminary Field Research and Related Projects

My research on community-level refugee integration in Germany began in the fall of 2015 when I joined PUARL, led by University of Oregon Professor Dr. Hajo Neis. As part of the PUARL team, I contributed to the development of *A Refugee Pattern Language* (Neis, Meier, Furukawazono 2017b) and PUARL's broader initiative, Refugee

Integration in Europe: Pattern Languages, Design, and Building (PUARL n.d.). The pattern language approach we took in analyzing refugee integration in German emphasized the importance of spatial aspects of integration for both refugees and host communities. Our approach also included co-design with refugees and longer-term local residents. The pattern method addresses social and spatial problems in a unique way and is used by numerous social disciplines, including environmental disciplines and architecture. Originally written in 1978 by Alexander et al., *A Pattern Language: Towns, Buildings, Construction* includes a collection of 253 patterns that range in scale and mode from large regions to cities and towns to construction details. As a member of the PUARL team, I contributed to the first drafts of *A Refugee Pattern Language* (Neis, Meier, Furukawazono 2017b), which sought to provide tangible, material solutions for refugee integration in Germany.[8]

I conducted preliminary field research in Germany with the PUARL team in July and August 2016. We visited four communities in Germany and met with local officials, toured refugee facilities, and spoke with people who had arrived in Germany as refugees. Our work has been published in a co-authored, peer-reviewed journal article (Neis, Meier, and Furukawazono 2018), in conference proceedings (Neis, Meier, and Furukawazono 2017a, 2017b) and published online at Refugee Integration in Europe: Pattern Languages, Design, and Building (PUARL n.d.).

In August 2016, I made a trip to Berlin to investigate the everyday circumstances of refugee integration in that city. It was then that I first visited the Tempelhof refugee facility that I mentioned in Chapter I. At the time, the former airport in the city's center

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[8] PUARL's Refugee Pattern Language work is documented here: https://refugee.uoregon.edu/.

housed thousands of refugees who had recently arrived in Germany. During this visit, I first encountered the KOTR project and its blue shipping container. This work from 2015–2018 informed my own research focus on the local, material practices of refugees and host community members and led to the selection of the KOTR case study for this dissertation.

Working with the Kitchen on the Run—Participatory Research, Reciprocity in Research

My first encounter with the Kitchen on the Run's blue container kitchen came as a surprise as I was riding my bike in Berlin in 2016. I was on the lookout for local projects related to refugee integration, and I happened to notice the KOTR banner as I passed by (Figure 4.1).

Figure 4.1. August 18, 2016: The Kitchen on the Run in Berlin, Germany.

I registered to attend an event via the project's website. Unfortunately, that event was canceled due to a scheduling error. Because I only had a few days in the city and there were no other events scheduled during that time, I was unable to participate during that trip. However, after receiving Sylff Fellowship funding to conduct additional research in Germany in 2019, I contacted the KOTR team again to inquire about possibilities for engaging with

the project. As I did several months later with the Totem Pole Journey, I employed the methodological commitments of reciprocity in research and offered to assist the project as a volunteer during events. I also agreed to share the results of my research with the KOTR project team.

Through a series of email exchanges and video meetings from January through March, the KOTR project coordinators and I formed an agreement in which I would participate in KOTR events during the summer 2019 tour. Melanie, one of the four KOTR team members on site in Rendsburg, served as my primary contact for the project. I arrived in Germany in August 2019 for three weeks of participatory research in Berlin and Rendsburg. During that time, I participated in more than a dozen KOTR events. I completed approximately sixteen individual interviews. Additionally, I held two focus group interviews with women who had arrived in Germany as refugees. I also participated in dozens of informal conversations during events.

Language and Access Factors

During my preliminary research trip to Germany in 2016, I traveled with UO Professor Dr. Hajo Neis, a German citizen and native German language speaker with many professional connections. Dr. Neis's personal and professional network and his German fluency allowed us insider access to government officials and helped us secure entrance to refugee facilities.

In 2019, I traveled to Germany in more of an outsider capacity. Although I have basic German language skills, I chose to hire interpreters to support my research. Because of the international and multilingual nature of the KOTR project, I worked with both German and Arabic interpreters. Graham, one of the German-English interpreters,

worked as a research assistant with me for part of my time in Rendsburg. I also hired a local, German-English interpreter for a day of interviews and meetings during my last week in Rendsburg.

Melanie, my primary contact with the KOTR project, introduced me to Lukas, the municipal government liaison for the KOTR. As a result, I was able to hold an interview with Lukas, who helped me understand the project context in the town. Lukas connected me with Aliya, who worked as a German-Arabic interpreter with the city government helping refugees to complete administrative requirements and get settled in the town. As a result, I was able to hire Aliya as an interpreter.

2019 Research in Berlin—Situating the Broader Context of Local Integration Efforts

I began my 2019 field research in Berlin. I visited the Über den Tellerrand (ÜdT) headquarters, where I interviewed a staff member who had worked as a KOTR team member during the tours of two previous summers. I also attended Ein Abend in Polen (An Evening in Poland), an evening pierogi cooking event at the ÜdT headquarters. I visited several other local initiatives as well and interviewed leaders of those projects to better understand the context of refugee integration at the grassroots level in 2019, three years after my preliminary research trip. In total, I competed the following activities in Berlin:

- August 22, 2019: Interview with Katarina, staff member at Moabit Hilft
- August 22, 2019: Interview with Hans, volunteer at Templehof Hilft
- August 23, 2019: Interview with Dagmar, staff member at Berliner Stadtmission
- August 23, 2019: Interview with Anna, staff member at ÜdT HQ in Berlin

- August 24, 2019: Refugee voices tour with Mohammed
- August 25, 2019: Ein Abend in Polen cooking event at ÜdT HQ in Berlin

Interviews and Affect

Because of my emphasis on materiality, place, more-than-human elements, and more-than-verbal encounters, interviews were not the most important data collection technique for this project. However, I describe this method first in order to stake out one epistemological edge of the project. Interviews with participants can illuminate some important things about how temporary, informal urbanism works in relation to cultures of solidarity. However, because this research tries to get at aspects of the phenomena that exceed or elide representation, the interview as a method can offer only a partial account.

The limitations of interviews are apparent. An interview involves a research participant telling a researcher— often, as in my case, someone who is a near stranger— about what they did or do and how they feel or think about what they did or do. This method allows a researcher to understand what the participant thinks they did or do and what they think or feel about what they did or do—to some extent. More accurately, the interview often consists of a research participant telling a researcher what they think the researcher wants to know about their activities and feelings about them. Alternatively, given the endless variety of possible power dynamics and the typical lack of established relationship between the interviewee and the interviewer, the person being questioned may withhold details about what they think the researcher wants to know, or they may refrain from sharing aspects of their activities or thoughts that may be personal, controversial, confidential, sensitive, embarrassing, culturally unacceptable, illegal, or the like.

For me, assumptions of neutrality between a researcher and an interview participant are both false and potentially problematic. Fontana and Frey (2005) articulate the implications of non-neutrality: "If we proceed with the belief that neutrality is impossible (even assuming it would be desirable), then taking a stance becomes unavoidable" (116). With the unavoidability of taking a stance in mind, I consciously chose an approach that I summarize as that of *compassionate attending*. This approach was inspired by my commitment to a variety of situated approaches, including an advocacy commitment (Rose 2020), and the commitment to practicing basic tenets of the Indigenous Research Protocol (Antunes et al. 2018) introduced in Chapter II. Among these tenets is the guidance to "Listen for the Answer" by attending to body language and other nonverbal communications.

In contrast to the standard, piercing journalistic approach of pressing an interviewee until they have revealed what the journalist seeks, the Indigenous Research Protocol (Antunes et al. 2018) guides researchers to "always be respectful; do not push when an individual feels uncomfortable answering a question or has not given you the answer you desire" (18). Rather than an interrogation, Margaret Kovach (2010) frames an interview as a "conversational method" based on an exchange of stories and anecdotes. Importantly, the interview must take place with a commitment to receive what is given, rather than take what is desired.

In addition to issues of the relational dynamics between an interviewee and a researcher, an interviewee may not immediately recall many details of an experience when spontaneously asked by a researcher, but those un-recalled details may turn out to be quite influential in forming the interviewee's overall perception of an experience.

These challenges illustrate why affective aspects of experience are so difficult to study. Affect does not hold still but seems to move as one element in a continual chain reaction of experience and event.

Steven Pile (2009) discusses the limitations of asking about experience in his analysis of approaches to affect and emotion in human geography. While an individual can often readily report on various emotional states and speculate what factors might influence those states, affect operates on a pre-perceptive, pre-cognitive level that is generally less representable than emotion. Desire and aversion, for instance, may last only an instant, yet they exert a powerful, tangible influence. For example, the smell of food cooking and the sounds of music playing at a KOTR event may evoke a pedestrian's desire to alter their route and walk around a corner to find out what is happening. It may just as likely evoke an aversion that causes the pedestrian to cross the street and move away from the potential encounter. Pile argues that it is the non-representability of affect as compared to emotions that makes it a compelling object of research, but it is this very conceptual break with emotions that makes scholarship on affect difficult to conduct.

As noted by Pile (2009), within nonrepresentational theories in geography, there is a well-established line of scholarship that discusses the limitations of how people represent their experiences (9). Affect, on the other hand, does not reside in the human subject, but is a transpersonal sort of a thing, and therefore, well-established methods of observation, interview, and participation in the social sciences are inappropriate tools for the job of studying affect (11). The commitment, though, that Pile recognizes between geographical studies of emotion and affect, is that both are interested "in flows between people, and other things. They share, then, a relational ontology that privileges the fluid

over the fixed" (10). A major challenge for my project was to test the methods for collection and analysis of these flows between people and other things.

Focus Groups with Women Refugees

Thanks to the help of Aliya, the Arabic-German interpreter, I held two focus groups with women who had arrived as refugees during my time in Rendsburg:

- Focus Group One: September 1, 2019, at the Schlossplatz in conjunction with the KOTR Flohmarkt Café (Fleamarket Café) during the Rendsburg fall festival with Graham, Aliya, and four Syrian women who had arrived in Germany as refugees
- Focus Group Two: September 3, 2019, at a café in the town center, with Graham, Aliya, and two women who had arrived in Germany as refugees

Aliya's insider connections were essential to making contact with Syrian and other Arabic speaking refugee women. Aliya speaks fluent Arabic and German and is herself a migrant to Germany. (Aliya migrated to Germany from Morocco in the late 1990s and is married to a German man with whom she has a teenage son. They all live together in Rendsburg). Aliya's insider status was key to scheduling meetings with the refugee women, who were accustomed to men in their families conducting public interactions with strangers. Given cultural norms and language barriers, it was necessary to work with a liaison such as Aliya. Aliya made the arrangements with the women who participated in the two focus groups. Aliya and Graham facilitated the multilingual conversations with the groups.

A focus group, generally speaking, is a meeting facilitated by a researcher at which a small group of people interact, share ideas, and discuss a particular topic

amongst themselves (Cameron 2005). The intent is that the group will generate insights together that would not have come from individual interviews alone. Cameron (2005) stresses that this interaction among members is a foundational aspect of what constitutes a focus group, noting that these interactions often produce a "synergistic effect" in which new insights emerge when one participant's comment inspires or provokes another's (153). In my field research with the KOTR, my intention was to arrange the focus groups as a means to overcome issues associated with my status as a researcher, an outsider, and a stranger. My hope was that people who knew each other, talking with each other, would create a more open and honest dialogue than would be feasible in interview with me alone.

In my case, the focus groups for the KOTR project provided opportunities for interaction that I would not otherwise have had. Both focus groups were held with women who had come to Germany as refugees and spoke little to no German or English. At Aliya's suggestion, for the first focus group, we met at the Kitchen on the Run at the same time that an informal coffee café event was taking place there. We set up a table next to the Kitchen, a short distance from the other activities of the day. The neutral space of the Kitchen on the Run coffee café also created a comfortable setting since each of the focus group participants had already participated in a Kitchen event and the Kitchen was located a short distance from where they lived. By moving a table and chairs away from the Kitchen itself, we created a neutral space that was also private from the men and other people who were at the Kitchen that day for the coffee café. We were able to share coffee and treats, which encouraged a more convivial atmosphere.

The group setting allowed for the women to participate with others whom they already knew. This opened a space in which they could speak up or chime in with each other and build upon what others said in a fairly comfortable and informal setting. For the second focus group, because there was not another suitable event that coincided at the Kitchen, we met at an outdoor café close to the Kitchen, and I hosted by getting coffees and pastries for the three women who attended that day.

In addition to the benefits of the women talking amongst each other in the focus groups, the focus groups provided a practical solution to the complexities of scheduling two interpreters and helped me maximize the number of people with whom I could speak during my short time in Rendsburg.

<u>Participant Observation</u>

I worked with my primary KOTR contact, Melanie, to arrange the details of my participation. Melanie offered to meet with me weekly while I was in Rendsburg. These meetings provided an opportunity to debrief the events of the week and also gave Melanie a chance to ask about my perspectives as an observer. We arranged that I would arrive a bit early for each cooking event to help set up and to have some time to speak informally with the project team and other local volunteers. I also usually stayed after the formal events, chatting or listening to music with people until the KOTR team decided it was time to close up for the night. I participated in the following events during my time in Rendsburg:

- August 26, 2019: First meeting with Melanie
- August 27, 2019: First cooking event
- August 29, 2019: Coffee Café event during the day

- August 29, 2019: Second cooking event
- August 30, 2019: Meeting with Aliya to discuss interpreter services
- September 2, 2019: Second meeting with Melanie
- September 3, 2019: Third cooking event
- September 6, 2019: Schnippeldisko event
- September 9, 2019: First community organizing meeting at the Kitchen
- September 10, 2019: Third meeting with Melanie
- September 12, 2019: Begegnungswerkstatt (Encounter Workshop)

Soundscape Analysis

As part of my overall approach to foreground sensory aspects of experience, before, during, and after all events I paid particularly close attention to the soundscape of the occasions and places. I made audio recordings of virtually everything I did. I would often walk across the square a short distance from the Kitchen to watch and listen to the events. I would frequently also place an audio recorder on a shelf in the kitchen and make short recordings of the ambient sounds of the events to remember after. The KOTR staff were aware of my recording efforts and similar techniques to take photos or make videos of events.

One of the benefits of my limited language skills and the multiple languages that were always being spoken at any moment is that it made it easier for me to focus on the soundscape than on the particulars of what people were saying. The music, the multiple languages being spoken, the many sounds of preparing food, and the broader sounds of the surrounding town all inform my analysis of the KOTR project.

Presentation of the Case Study

Overview and Context—Refugee and Migrant Integration in German Communities

Since the large-scale influx of asylum seekers to Europe began in 2015, European communities have been undergoing rapid social and spatial transformation as millions of refugees and migrants seek to integrate in host countries or simply find safe places to reside. Of all countries in Europe that are hosting migrants and refugees, I chose Germany because of the country's touted "Wilkommen Kultur" (welcome culture), which was prompted in large part by German Chancellor Angela Merkel's "Flüchtlinge Wilkommen" (refugees welcome) stance (Sommerpressekonferenz von Bundeskanzlerin Merkel 2015).

By 2019, when I conducted field research on the KOTR project, the rate of refugee arrivals in Europe had decreased, but the overall population of refugees in Germany had increased from 1.2 million in 2016 (UNHCR 2018) to more than 1.8 million refugees by the end of 2019 (Carter 2020). While rates have decreased, arrivals continue. In 2020, approximately 150,000 people filed first-time asylum applications in Germany (Eurostat n.d.). These forced migrants have joined hundreds of thousands of earlier arrivals, many still in limbo awaiting asylum approval or appeals (UNHCR 2018, European Commission 2016).

Since 2015, Chancellor Merkel's "Wilkommen" policy has generated reactions and activities in Germany at all government levels. Initially, German communities took on the role of "arrival city" (Saunders 2012) and collectively generated an atmosphere of "making Heimat" (Schmal, Elser, and Scheuermann 2016). "Heimat" is a German term

that means to create a place for one's own life, feeling, well-being, and belonging, embedded in the history and community to which one belongs.

In 2021, six years after Chancellor Merkel's declaration to the world, uncertain futures continue to mark the experience of all involved. Although international and national policies set many parameters for refugee integration, responses to the uncertainty of the situation are fundamentally informed by local contexts. Almost every village, town, and city in Germany hosts refugees (Federal Ministry of the Interior 2018). By late 2015, Germany had adopted a policy of distributing refugees to communities throughout the country according to the "Königstein Key," which sets quotas for each state according to economic capacity (Federal Office for Migration and Refugees 2018). Given this widespread local placement in almost every municipality across the country, whether integration takes place peacefully or violently, through charity or in solidarity, is in large part dependent on how things go in particular camps, neighborhoods, and towns.

At the local scale, responses vary tremendously. For instance, hundreds of refugee facilities have been set ablaze in acts of arson (Staufenberg 2015; Kirschbaum 2015), but the crisis has also prompted an upwelling of individual and collective acts of generosity, solidarity, and compassion (Elgot 2015; Janot 2015; Cassanova 2016, 6). In both cases, refugees and Germans integrate in the everyday through informal acts among citizens and refugees, such as soccer games at refugee camps, refugee-led apartment renovations in Essen, and music and meal-sharing projects with refugees and Berliners. I argue that these are exactly the sites from which new relationships and communities emerge.

This case study investigates the reality of the Wilkommen Kultur and the high expectations and implied promises that were set in 2015 by Angela Merkel and German

society with a goal to analyze how the Wilkommen Kultur is actually working on the ground.

The Origins, Intent, and Approach of the Kitchen on the Run Project

As introduced in Chapter I, the KOTR is an initiative of a German non-governmental organization called Über den Tellerrand (ÜdT), which operates with the following mission:

> Über den Tellerrand ("Beyond Your Plate" in English) is a commonly used German expression for open-mindedness . . . [ÜdT] has become an enriching and inclusive international community where "people on the move" come to find a sense of belonging and experience care and compassion. . . . We provide avenues for "people on the move" to enrich their host communities by sharing their own knowledge and unique skillsets. We apply a holistic approach to the complex process of integrating newcomers into German society, while at the same time acknowledging and empowering their agency. By bringing newcomers together with their host communities, we aim to create a sense of belonging as well as reduce stereotypes and prejudices on both sides. These efforts contribute towards the creation of a more united, inclusive and open society. (Üeber den Tellerrand n.d.)

The KOTR is a key initiative in ÜdT's overall efforts to create ongoing communities of newcomers (refugees and migrants) and longer-term residents (Figure 4.2). ÜdT headquarters are located in Berlin in a large office and event space known as the Kitchen Hub. ÜdT and the KOTR have developed a satellite network of projects in more than thirty-five German cities. ÜdT and KOTR programming revolves around

shared cooking events. ÜdT has established permanent spaces for events in many cities, while KOTR activities take place in public, outdoor spaces.

The KOTR supports refugee and local resident community-building through group cooking events held outdoors in public, urban squares in and around a shipping container that has been outfitted as a mobile kitchen. The KOTR travels to small to mid-sized German communities throughout the summer months. The project hosts collaborative meal sharing events as a way of bringing together migrants and German citizens and catalyzes the creation of local groups after the Kitchen departs. In addition to cooking activities, local groups evolve and expand their programming according to the needs and interests of the participants. Some groups, such as the Hamburg ÜdT satellite, host dance nights or group hiking excursions. Many groups run language tutoring programs that can benefit both German nationals and people arriving as migrants and refugees. Some groups also provide support for refugees in navigating government paperwork. Other groups establish buddy systems in which volunteers introduce newcomers to various aspects of their new communities.

Figure 4.2. A promotional image from Über den Tellerand's social media pages.Wir Haben Platz translates to We Have Space in English. The statement is made with a double meaning to indicate that there is space at the table and there is space for refugees in Germany.

The Location: Rendsburg Schloßplatz (Schlossplatz)

Rendsburg is located in the far north of Germany, between the North Sea and the Batlic Sea (Figure 4.3.) The town of about thirty thousand people lies along the Eider River and the Kiel Canal. The canal serves as an important shipping route between the North and Baltic Seas. During its time in Rendsburg in 2019, the Kitchen was installed in the town's Schloßplatz (Schlossplatz), a public square located at the edge of the town's central pedestrian zone and just around the corner from Schiffbrückenplatz, another town square, where an outdoor market is held twice each week. The Kitchen was located near the edge of the Schlossplatz so that it was easily visible from the busy street that marked the edge of the pedestrian zone.

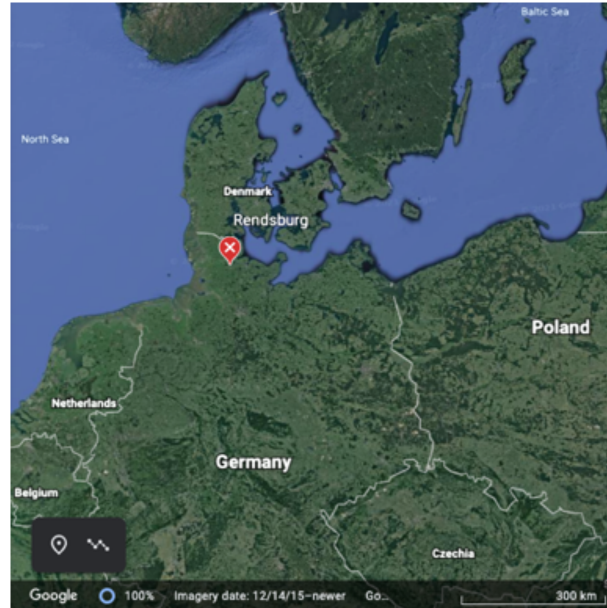

Figure 4.3. Rendsburg's location in northern Germany, between the North and Baltic Seas.

Figure 4.4. The Schlossplatz location in Rendsburg's old city center.

The Kitchen's high-profile location was close to a busy commercial area of cafés, restaurants, bars, shops, offices, and apartments (Figure 4.4). This meant that the Kitchen placement was directly in the path of people passing by on foot, by bike, or in a car. The intended result was that people were constantly coming by during events to see what was happening. Often, people would stop and sit at a bench along the edge of the Schlossplatz to watch the Kitchen activities from a distance.

<u>The Kitchen</u>

The Kitchen itself consists of a blue shipping container with dimensions of approximately 20 feet long by 8 feet wide by 8½ feet high. In general, shipping container dimensions are standardized to allow for their use in global trade. This particular container is equipped with double-hinged doors that open along its length (Figure 4.5). The interior of the blue container has been built out with wooden shelves and cupboards all along the back wall and a central island counter that includes a stove, a sink, and

Figure 4.5. August 2019: Setting up the Kitchen on the Run in Rendsburg.

additional storage space beneath the counter. A covered wooden terrace, a sort of front porch, accompanies the container and is installed along with it. This covered wooden terrace runs the length of the kitchen and serves as a dining and cooking area that doubles the floor space of the container. The front porch is configured so that the container doors can be entirely opened and tied back along the sides of the container or closed partially to block cold or rain (Figure 4.6.)

The Kitchen includes several tables and benches that can all fold flat for easy storage and transport within the container. The design of the tables and benches makes it easy to take them out of storage, set them up for preparing food, then move them around or into the town square when it comes time to set the tables and eat. Several folding,

Figure 4.6. The Kitchen on the Run with doors partially closed.

patio-style lounge chairs are stored inside the kitchen and placed out in the town square during events.

Cooking Event Formats

The KOTR team has developed a variety of events for the Kitchen's seven-week residency in each town. This thoughtfulness, combined with plenty of room for spontaneity and organic development, sets a context that helps to build relationships while continually inviting in new participants. There are no fees charged for any event, although a box is always set out in which people can leave monetary donations.

Group Cooking Events

The KOTR signature events are group cooking evenings, which are held about three times each week. Approximately fifteen to twenty-five people participate in these events, for which advanced registration is required. For each event, the KOTR team identifies three volunteers who contribute a recipe of personal significance and lead the participants in preparing the dish. The intention behind this approach is to create a situation in which participants are coming together as equals. At the events, there is a lot of effort to eliminate—temporarily—the distinctions between refugee, migrant, visitor, or German national. The goal is to celebrate the diverse cultures and traditions from which the meals come and the skills that the participants bring to the event. The group cooking evenings follow this general schedule:

Afternoon—A KOTR team member and the volunteers who are leading the cooking make a trip to the market or grocery store to get the necessary ingredients. Because the recipes are from international traditions, volunteers will often bring their own special ingredients that may be hard to acquire in Rendsburg.5:00 pm—The KOTR team and a

few volunteers (in this case, me) arrive to begin setting up the Kitchen. The container doors are opened, and the group begins to set out tables and chairs. Important at this point is to make a cozy, welcoming atmosphere before other participants arrive. To this end, the first priorities are to arrange fresh flowers, make tea and coffee, and set up a welcome table with the drinks, cookies, promotional materials, and flowers. A sandwich board is set out with announcements written in chalk. The welcome table is strategically placed just at the edge of the porch so that people passing by can approach without having to come inside per se, but close enough that the KOTR team and volunteers can readily chat with them.

5:30—Participants begin to arrive.

5:45—The KOTR team calls everyone to assemble together in a circle in the square just in front of the Kitchen. When the weather is cold or rainy, everyone crowds inside the porch and kitchen. The KOTR team welcomes everyone and explains the plan for the evening. Key to the event's success is the emphasis that everyone should stay for the whole event, including the cleanup after the meal. The team then orchestrates some sort of icebreaker or getting-to-know-you game. The games are simple and offer an opportunity for people to begin to meet each other. For example, one evening the KOTR team put on some recorded music and set up a game in which everyone was to dance until the music stopped. When the music stopped, each person was tasked with asking the person closest to them a particular question. The music would start and stop until everyone had a chance to talk to several people. Other nights, the tasks were less

challenging for those whose primary languages were other than German. For instance, one night the group was challenged to arrange themselves according to hand size. This activity could be accomplished without discussion, yet it required close interaction, as people simply held their hands up to others' hands to determine the proper order.

6:00—After the icebreakers and introductory explanation, the group is begins prepares the evening's dishes. Each person in charge of a recipe is stationed at a table and the rest of the group chooses where to assist. Depending on the complexity of the recipes, food preparation goes on for an hour or two. The events are only loosely structured at this time. The close quarters in which everyone is pitching in to wash, chop, sauté, stir, and measure make a lively scene. The single stove and sink in the kitchen and the open cupboard policy, in which everyone simply searches around to find the dishes and utensils they need, creates a sort of happy chaos. Music is always playing during this time. The KOTR team checks in with the head cooks to make sure things are going okay and also chats with people passing by.

7:00–8:00 (or so)—The exact time for the meal to be served depends on the size of the group and complexity of the dishes being prepared. As the preparations are finished, the benches and tables are moved out into the square and arranged, banquet style, in a long line into the square. Finally, everyone sits down together, and the meal is enjoyed.

9:00 (or so)—There is no rush to the meal, but as people finish, the KOTR team works with participants to begin the dishwashing and cleanup. The KOTR team reminds people

that the event will end with a cleanup “party,” and everyone is again encouraged to help out. The official start to the cleanup “party” is made known when the KOTR team turns on some loud and upbeat dance music and lights up the disco ball hanging over the sink.

9:30–10:00—As the cleanup is completed, people stand about and chat, and eventually the group disperses. Often, a spontaneous after-party gets started by someone putting on music, bringing out a bottle of wine, and, once, a hookah. Other nights, the KOTR team closes down the container shortly after the cleanup is finished.

Friday Night Events

On several Fridays during the seven-week residency, the KOTR team hosts evented that were open to the public without registration. Required and people were encouraged to stop by at any point during the evening. Specific event themes in Rendsburg in 2019 included:

- Infotreffen (Informational Meeting)—an open house at the start of the seven-week residency
- Filmabend (movie night)—a screening of the KOTR documentary, “The Taste of Home”
- Lebendige Bibliothek (Living Library)—an evening of storytelling with various locals and newcomers
- Schnippeldisko—a group cooking event in which participants brought produce and other food staples from home and created and prepared recipes from the various contributions

- Begegnungswerkstatt (Encounter Workshop)—an evening of activities designed to facilitate participants' getting to know each other
- Abschlusspicknick (Closing Picnic)—a potluck event in which participants were asked to bring already-prepared dishes to share

Drop-by Café Days

The Kitchen was opened to the public as a café offering coffee, tea, snacks, and sweets twice during the seven-week residency. No fees were charged, and people were encouraged to make their own coffee, help themselves to snacks, and chat with others. For these events, the KOTR team brought several armchairs to the Kitchen and created a sort of living room on the porch. The first of these café days was held during a weekly outdoor market, and the second was held during the town's fall festival on the day of the flea market. On both days, the Schlossplatz was full of vendor stands and many people shopping and enjoying the larger events.

Community Use of the Kitchen

The KOTR project makes the Kitchen available for community use for events and meetings at times when there are not KOTR events. In Rendsburg, for example, a local DJ played music with a group of friends on the Saturday afternoon during the town's fall festival.

<u>Kitchen on the Run Germany Tour 2019</u>

The project passed its fourth anniversary in 2019. Each year since its launch in 2016, the project has organized around a summer tour. The specific formats for the tours have evolved over time to meet the changing capacities of ÜdT and KOTR staff and to adapt to the evolving context of refugee and migrant integration in Germany. The 2019

summer tour locations were selected through a competitive application process that prioritized smaller towns and cities of fewer than fifty thousand inhabitants. In 2019, the tour was organized to include residencies of seven weeks in each of three German communities:

- May 2nd to June 24th, 2019: Hof (Saale)
- June 24th to August 13th, 2019: Schmalkalden
- August 13th to October 1, 2019: Rendsburg

As a newcomer to the project, I was invited to participate for a limited time in Rendsburg. At the project team's request, I arrived in Rendsburg during the third week of the seven-week residency there and participated in events for about two weeks. The team of four new staffers was occupied with the work of learning how to run the project and had limited capacity to host me. In addition to their need to focus on their internal process, the team had requested some time to get to know the local partners before I arrived.

Analysis of the Case Study

The following sections of the chapter develop the conceptual cartography presented in Chapter I and Two. In what follows, I analyze the key questions of the dissertation through the KOTR project. I employ my auto, material, ethnographical approach and the theoretical tools of contemporary, posthumanist, new materialist philosophies to address the following key questions:

1. What are the roles of everyday urban places and material artifacts in the formation of communities of solidarity?

2. How does the temporary nature of participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms influence the development of solidarity, including solidarity that addresses ongoing European colonial legacies?
3. How do posthumanist, new materialist philosophies account for the role of place, personhood, and nonhuman agency in the co-production of space and subjectivities?

Because the roles of place and design artifacts and their temporary nature in the KOTR project are inextricably intertwined, I have combined the analysis of the first two questions around the specific components of the project, rather than separating the analysis of the components according to the questions.

What are the roles of everyday urban places and material artifacts in the formation of communities of solidarity? How does the temporary nature of participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms influence the development of solidarity, including solidarity that addresses ongoing European colonial legacies?

The Location: Rendsburg Schloßplatz (Schlossplatz)

The Kitchen's public location brings the topic of refugee and migrant integration into public view. Importantly, the Kitchen and the convivial cooking events bring *positive* aspects of integration into the public consciousness. By 2019, Germany had been navigating how to handle the influx of migrants for at least five years. In the months prior to the KOTR residency in Rendsburg, the county had received another round of several hundred new arrivals at the temporary refugee camp at the edge of town. The community's response continued to be mixed.

Oh! He is Very Nice.

I met with Lukas, the City of Rendsburg liason to the KOTR project, in my first days in town. During our interview, Lukas spoke of the benefits of the KOTR project and its methods of introducing newcomers and locals. He explained that his office has to work with negative stereotypes about refugees in the community due to press and media portrayals of the issues:

> There are a lot of problems here. People who don't have contact with foreign people. They just read the press or watch TV. They see all these bad things. There is someone killing someone; there is someone beating someone. Someone's stealing something—whatever—all very bad things. But we always recognize that if they get known each other they say, *oh*! *He is very nice*.

Lucas' comments illustrate the timeworn issues of media systems that capitalize on conflict and violence and the ways in which those sorts of stories cultivate mistrust and alienation. His comments also illustrate the impact that very simple acts of getting to know each other can have in alleviating this mistrust and alienation.

You Don't Even Need to Walk through a Door

The process of getting to know each other, as Lukas mentioned, requires time and personal interaction. However, the Kitchen itself and getting to know each other through convivial activities impactful sorts of introductory acts. The Kitchen does the introducing. In my last weekly meeting with Melanie, my primary contact with the KOTR team, I asked Melanie directly about her thoughts on the importance of the Kitchen activities taking place outdoors in public, rather than inside, even in a public sort

of building such as a community center. Several of Melanie's comments captured the nuanced importance of the outdoor, public location. First, Melanie noted that the outdoor, public location makes it easy for people to engage with the project. The sandwich board and welcome table invite people to approach the Kitchen. Melanie commented:

> I think that actually what is so special about the shipping container is that it's really easy to access. You have the terrace and everything, so you don't even really need to walk through a door. And I do think that that makes a big difference. You can approach it and you can decide by yourself how you approach it. Whereas if you could walk into a room, to walk out is always more difficult. There you can go have a look, read the poster. If you want to come closer, if you are a person who likes to get personal information, you talk. Some people just run inside as they say, what's that? And that's also sometimes kind of weird to us.

Melanie also noted how much easier it is to attract participation in KOTR events as a result of the Kitchen's outdoor, public location:

> So also, the accessibility [in the town square]. I also think that it's just more visible. It's just that you can do, like, the best programs inside a house. You can have the best Facebook, social media, advertising, whatever. [But with the Kitchen] you will always reach people that are just passing by.

Along these lines, Melanie also mentioned how many of the people from Arabic countries who participate in KOTR events comment on how much they miss public life in their home countries. According to Melanie, this "life on the streets" (her term), is a much bigger element of social interaction in Arabic countries such as Syria than in Germany. In Melanie's account, the lack of public social life in Germany is one of the

elements that contributes to feelings of isolation among the refugees and migrants. Even during my short time in Rendsburg, I noticed that the Kitchen created an informal gathering place for several groups of migrant families and friends. People who were not participating in a formal group cooking event would still stop by to visit or to drop off or collect family members who had registered for a particular event. By the third week of its residency, the Kitchen had become a local hub of sorts.

Lastly, Melanie shared a conversation about the Kitchen's design and location that she had recently had with her uncle, an architect, who was visiting to participate in a cooking event in Rendsburg:

> He said that for him, the most important people about this project is no one who is actually in any way actively participating. But for him, the most important thing is all the people that just walked by and maybe they are critical. Maybe they just drive by, but they see something is happening there. The City is doing something. There are different people. They look different. This is the target group that is never reached in other projects. And it's actually the target group that you want, because they might be the people you don't know who they are but who are obviously not participating in any events you're doing. So actually, these are the people, if you want, like broad communication without hate [to emphasize that] plurality is a good thing. And let's be open and come together. That's kind of a signal they all get, hopefully. Sometimes, like in Schmalkalden [a town the KOTR had visited earlier that summer] someone thought that it's just a waste container or in Hof [a town the KOTR had visited earlier that summer] people

thought that the school is rebuilding. So it might not always work! [We both laugh].

For Melanie's uncle, the container and the people interacting in it are sharing a counternarrative to the media portrayal of conflict and violence. That counternarrative is apparent to even the most casual observers and passersby. Through its placement in a public place and the highly visible, open design that allows people to observe the cooking and eating together, the container tells a story to anyone passing by.

Lukas also noted the impact of the Kitchen in public space. He explained that the KOTR team and the City of Rendsburg staff had held one of their weekly meetings at the Kitchen during the town's outdoor market. Lukas was surprised at how many people came up to the Kitchen to say hello and ask what was happening. The ease of these casual interactions had inspired him to consider holding other municipal meetings outside in the public squares as a strategy to encourage more public participation in city affairs.

The Kitchen is a Temporary Urban Intervention

As noted, the KOTR had a seven-week residency in Rendsburg and each of the other towns visited during the 2019 summer tour. The limited duration is an important part of the project. The project created a festive atmosphere in the town square that contributed to the other outdoor summer programming in the city center. The Kitchen requires utility connections (water, gas, electricity) that can be accommodated with temporary connections for a short time, but if it were to be a permanent fixture, additional infrastructure investments—and permits—would be required. In addition to these logistical details, an important part of the appeal of the project is its novelty. There are some real inconveniences to preparing food with a group of twenty people outdoors in a

shipping container with a single stove and sink. The short-term duration makes these inconveniences tolerable.

The project concept, though, is to instigate connections and to cultivate the foundations for a longer-term community group that can identify another location in which to carry on activities after the Kitchen departs. To this end, after the first month in residency, in which the focus is on initiating connections, the KOTR team hosts several community planning meetings to help a group start to form and identify priorities for future events.

Lastly, it is important to note that the outdoor programming is limited in Germany by the weather, particularly in Rendsburg. Rendsburg is located far in the north of the country, between the North Sea and the Baltic Sea. The weather was quite chilly during several events, and the rains had become more frequent even in early September. While the chilliness added to the comradery and was countered with shawls and blankets that the KOTR team provided, the events would not have had as much attendance as the weather got colder and the days shortened later in the fall.

The Kitchen

The Kitchen is designed for dynamic interaction with the people who use it (Figure 4.7). As a shipping container, the Kitchen itself is mobile. In addition to the mobility of the container, all of the Kitchen's design elements require ongoing engagement. Each participant at KOTR events engages with the design artifacts of the Kitchen in numerous ways. For example, as mentioned, the tables and benches must be set out and moved around multiple times during each event. First, the tables and benches are set out in the square to create spaces for welcoming people and for informal chatting. Next, they are

moved on the terrace and set up as work stations. They are moved again out in the square and arranged in a banquet style for the meal. Then, some tables are moved to create a dishwashing station. Lastly, all of the tables and benches are cleaned and stored back inside the container.

Figure 4.7. A KOTR team member making a blended drink in the kitchen.

Preparing the food also requires active engagement by the participants. Participants are expected to use the space, stove, sink, utensils, and pots and pans as they would in their home kitchens. People are encouraged to rummage around to find whatever they need. To accommodate participants who speak a variety of languages, cupboards and drawers are labeled with pictures of what is stored inside. While the staff is there to help as needed, participants make the kitchen their own while they prepare food and clean up after the meal (Figure 4.8).

Figure 4.8. A cleanup party after a group cooking event.

By design, the KOTR events require the help of everyone present. The interactive design elements require participants to engage with each other. By doing activities together, people begin to get to know each other. Subtle design elements facilitate interaction. For example, the seats are benches big enough for two or maybe three people at each bench. The two-person benches ensure that no one is sitting alone. People have to ask to sit at a bench with someone because the person sitting has to move the bench back from the table so someone else can squeeze in. Even the simple act of sitting down at the table is an act of making friends across language barriers and cultural difference.

During my time in Rendsburg, the Kitchen was accompanied by a Fußball (table football) game placed on the square near the container (Figure 4.9). The game was almost always being played. This play offered another means of getting to know each other that did not require proficiency in a shared spoken language. In addition, several lightweight, folding lounge chairs were also unpacked at each event and set out in the square, creating spaces for more intimate conversations.

Figure 4.9. A game of table soccer during the Schnippeldisko.

<u>Cooking and Eating Together</u>

As noted, the menus for group cooking events were organized around recipes provided by three or four volunteers for each event. The meals, therefore, were an eclectic mix of dishes from a variety of cultural traditions. One event featured a vegetarian curry recipe provided by Toni, a woman originally from Thailand, who had

been living in Rendsburg for some years. Another night, Aliya, the woman who helped me as an interpreter, shared a chicken and rice dish from her native Morocco. Daniel, from Ghana, prepared FuFu. Alex, from Nigeria, made a fish stew. Claudia, a German woman who lived at the retirement community just steps away from the Kitchen, directed Hasan, a young Syrian man, in the production of a lettuce salad that included a homemade dressing, green peppers, and bananas. The inclusion of bananas led to much joking around about the *German* authenticity of the salad. However, this seemingly unusual combination of salad ingredients made perfect sense to me as an American Midwesterner, having grown up with tropical fruits spotlighted in many a mayonnaise-dressed salad.

Of all the many delicious foods that were prepared at the KOTR events, for me, the night a group of Syrian women made a feast of kibbeh was the occasion that most illuminated the affective forces and flows of people cooking together as an act of solidarity. That night, Pierre Gilgenas, the then-mayor of Rendsburg—the Bürgermeister—attended the event. Peter (German) and Ahmed (Syrian), two of the four KOTR project team members, staffed the event that night. Peter, Ahmed, and Daniel (originally from Ghana and a long-time German resident) were excited that the Bürgermeister would be in attendance. They joked around that Daniel was in fact the real Bürgermeister. Their playful mood caught hold with the group and set a happy tone at the start of the event. The Bürgermeister arrived and stayed for a few hours, helping to prepare the kibbeh.

The four Syrian women in charge of the kibbeh were clearly experts at what they were doing. As they focused on cooking at the stove, other volunteers led participants in

preparing the evening's other dishes. When the various components of the kibbeh were ready, the women moved to a table station and set to work forming the meatballs. Other participants migrated to the table until a group was crowded around. The meatballs were hollowed, then stuffed, so some skill was required to achieve the intended effect. I watched Maya shaping the meatball around her finger with the adept confidence of someone who has done so countless times. Others among us, including me, were not so skilled. Our clumsy lumps were repaired by the Syrian leaders insofar as possible.

Because neither of us spoke German very well, and words would not have helped much even if we had, Maya showed me the proper way to make kibbeh by taking my hand in hers and forming the meat in a thin layer around my finger. She then pinched a bit of the filling out from the dish and pressed it into the middle of the opening we had made. This tactile lesson continued with others until a huge platter of kibbeh had been assembled. I believe the meatballs were then cooked again, but the rush of activities in setting the tables for the meal kept me from watching the rest of the kibbeh preparations.

Finally, we sat down to eat. With the banquet style of the tables, people passed their plates around family style, and those nearest a serving dish would add some food from that dish to each plate. But because the kibbeh included a special yogurt sauce, the head cooks served it directly to each person. Maya spooned the yogurt sauce on a plate, then placed a few kibbeh atop the sauce. I, a vegetarian for years, received the plate when handed to me. I considered my ethical commitments and decided it was more important to respectfully enjoy this meal than to keep to my usual policies of not eating meat. I ate slowly, absorbing the moment, my eyes focused on my plate.

Sometimes, at the group events, a full silence would fall over the group during the meals as people simply enjoyed the sensorial richness of the moment. This was one such time when words stopped being necessary. Other nights, the cacophony of people talking in multiple languages, music playing, pots banging, dishes clanking, wooden benches scraping, water running, and ships, trains, and traffic going by outside created its own sort of acute awareness (Figure 4.10). The fullness of the sounds in these cases would

Figure 4.10. A group cooking evening.

wrap the group in a collective, affective connection, in a moment of being together across the endless sonic variations.

Sharing the recipes—the kibbeh, the curry, the FuFu, the Moroccan rice and chicken, an exquisitely arranged fruit platter, and dozens of others—allowed the

participants to share a bit of themselves with each other. The impacts of sharing and receiving and the importance of having the opportunity to share were made clear in many ways, but perhaps most poignantly during the first focus group I held with a group of refugee women from Syria. I had offered to get everyone coffee when we began the meeting, but the consensus was that we should wait until after our conversation for coffee and sweets.

At the end of nearly two hours of conversation, I distributed small gifts to each person to thank them for their time and for sharing their stories with me. I asked if they would like a coffee now. They accepted, but one commented and the others concurred, that they wished I could visit them at their homes in Syria, where they could host me. They wanted me to see how beautiful it is there. This was a kind sentiment, and I agreed that I wished we could do so, too. One women reciprocated my gift by taking a small bottle of perfume from her purse and giving it to me. My purposes in relaying these exchanges is to share how they made clear to me that part of the impact of living as a refugee, particularly for these women who are wives and mothers, is that their identities as refugees had eclipsed their other identities as providers, hosts, cooks, and caretakers. (One had been separated from her children, one had been widowed, one had lost a child to the war.)

The cooking events could never fix all of the loss they were enduring, but the events did give everyone a chance to share some of the small—and essential—joys of life. The events also offered a beginning point for building new ways of living together in Rendsburg. At this point, Hasan, Maya's young adult son, came to tell us we had to pack up the tables because the Coffee Café was closing. I had noticed that he had been walking

by from time to time, managing the need to wrap up with the engaged conversation we were having and keeping an eye out for his mom as we talked.

Nomadic Subjectivities

The third research question asked, "How do posthumanist, new materialist philosophies account for the role of place, personhood, and nonhuman agency in the co-production of space and subjectivities?" As I have attempted to demonstrate above, the KOTR is, at its heart, an initiative designed to instigate new relationships among people with diverse cultural identities with a goal of facilitating the development of communities of solidarity. Everyday urban places and material design artifacts are key to the way in which these goals are pursued. The conceptual underpinnings of the project recognize subjectivities as produced relationally, as contingent and emergent, and as co-produced through interactions with the more-than-human world. Posthumanist concepts within the critical, Deleuzian-Braidottian lineage that I engage in this project provide extensive accounts of the KOTR's conceptual underpinnings. For example, Braidotti's posthumanist theory emphasizes relationships over identity and argues that identities form through relations. Accordingly, the self/Self, is a function of "a number of negotiations with structures that precede it" (Braidotti 2016). As such, posthumanism is an account of radical relationality situated in contemporary political and material circumstances.

Subjectivity within a critical posthumanist account is understood as a result of power differentials as well as material and energetic forces and flows that convene and interact in particular places and times. Braidotti elaborates:

> Posthumanism put simply: relations are more significant than identity. Analyze the ways in which otherness and sameness interact in an asymmetrical set of power relations. Sex, race, and nature are dynamic variables, not unitary categories. This is about how the specific chunk of flesh that you are interacts with the social code. Definition by the negative is out—pure difference, differing is in as with Deleuze and a thousand little sexes. (Rosi Braidotti, Utrecht Summer Seminar, August 2016).

Therefore, subjectivity is nomadic; it is not fixed, nor is it solely a function of societal superstructures or individualized psychologies.

The figure of the nomadic subject is Braidotti's (2011, 2012, 2013), inspired by Deleuze and Guattari's (DG) (1987) discussion of nomadism. Here I will very briefly elaborate this conceptual lineage, beginning with DG's account of subjectivity. DG are not particularly interested in what a self or subject is; rather, they are interested in modes of existence. They therefore begin *A Thousand Plateaus* (*ATP*) (1987) with the figure of a rhizome. A rhizome is a particular mode of existence, the characteristics of which are geographically and historically specific, contingent, and themselves also produced rhizomatically.

As a geophilosophy, the concepts presented in *ATP* are rife with figures of the Earth; a rhizome is among the first of them. Rather than a collection of objects, though, the Earth might be better understood in terms of movements or events. DG's ontology is immanent; that is, there is no reference to an outside or above, either in terms of a governing reason or a governing god. The immanent ontology is one of (virtual) forces and flows that intensify in various iterations and that are captured and sediment or stratify

in various ways to form the (actual) entities of the world, including humans. A rhizome is a figure of movement and making from within.

Dan Smith and John Protevi (2020) elaborate on DG's account: "Subjects are roughly speaking the patterns of these multiple and serial syntheses which fold in on themselves producing a site of self-awareness. Of course, Deleuze never simply proclaims this as a bald thesis, but develops a genetic account of subjectivity in many of his books" (7). A subject, then, is a sort of site; a subject has a geography. Or, perhaps more precisely, a subject includes a geography.

The site of self-awareness—a subject—is located with what DG call a *field of immanence* (also referred to as a plane of consistency). The field of immanence is a region of conditions of possibility. Bonta and Protevi (2004) describe this field or plane as that which enables the creation of and communication between assemblages/bodies (124). DG (1987) discuss the plane of consistency as a virtual region open to experimentation—a region of possibility (159).

A Collective Construction Style

Importantly, the plane of consistency/field of immanence is not pre-existing, prescribed, nor fixed (it is not transcendent—there are no Platonic Forms in DG's universe). Instead, it is composed—it "must be constructed" (Deleuze and Guattari 1987, 157)—by what DG call *abstract machines* (158). Abstract machines construct the plane of consistency, and they also construct assemblages (such as humans, buildings, microbes) upon the plane of consistency. It is beyond the scope of this project to discuss abstract machines, but briefly, the concept of abstract machines includes an emphasis on the materializing abilities of prepersonal, apersonal, or affective forces.

DG (1987) explain this kind of construction by way of the methods used by stonecutters who built Gothic Cathedrals. The story illustrates a distinction between transcendence and immanence. Stonecutters—journeymen—built by squaring each stone that was used to create a cathedral. The journeymen ensured that the material of each individual stone was shaped so that it aligned well with the other stones that were joined to build the structure. Contrast this with the approach of architects, who created a template against which each stone was to be measured and modified so that all achieved a similarity that could be easily used in construction (368). The template is a model for reproduction; matter, in this case the stone, is prepared for the preexisting form. In contrast, the stone cutting by the journeymen (skilled labors and artisans), "is never prepared and therefore homogenized matter, but is essentially laden with singularities (which constitute a form of content)" (369). The stonecutters' approach is a phenomenon of *emergence and assemblage in relation to the outside* (the stones must be cut to fit with and against other stones).

Through the KOTR events, participants cultivate their own subjectivities and a collective subjectivity through interactive engagements with the Schlossplatz, the Kitchen, the food preparation and consumption, and the seemingly mundane acts of doing together. The KOTR project is a phenomenon of *emergence and assemblage in relation to the outside.* In contrast, the government processes of asylum approval make a template, in this case, not for building a cathedral, but for building citizens. Applicants who fit the template become part of the German assemblage. There is no place for those who do not fit within the context of government approvals. At the scale of the KOTR, though, and

the myriad other grassroots, citizen-led integration initiatives in Germany, refugees, migrants, and those with German passports build new forms of community.

For DG (1987), nomadism is about movement. A nomadic subject is a phenomena of continual experimentation within a site of self-awareness (though it is also continually moving). Nomadism is the movement that prevents the stratification of the subject or that de-stratifies the stratified. Nomadic movement is a process of desubjectification (159); Braidotti calls this movement *defamiliarization*. DG's ethics call for this sort of movement. They declare one must dismantle the organism: "And how can we unhook ourselves from the points of subjectification that secure us, nail us down to a dominant reality? Tear the unconscious away from significance and interpretation! But practice caution—one courts death" (160).

Nomadology, in *ATP* (1987), is a form of thought. It is a science. It is a mode of existence. It is a form of space. Nomads are people who practice a particular mode of existence. While DG's account includes a discussion of some Indigenous cultures on Earth whose lifeways include movement to and from particular regions or territories, a nomadic existence is not only about this kind of geographical movement. A nomadic mode of existence includes the building together of new sorts of lifeways and places such as those I have discussed here. Again, a nomadic mode of existence is about *emergence and assemblage in relation to the outside.*

Nomadology is inspired by the etymology of the word *nomos*. Colebrook (2010) explains that *nomos* is "derived from the root word nem, which means 'to distribute'" (190). DG (1987) contrast two forms of distribution, that of *logos* and that of *nomos*. *Logos* consists of structure and organization, while *nomos* is an anarchic distribution

(190). Braidotti's nomadic theory is instigated by Deleuze and DG's work, and it is also, in DG's terms, its own line of flight from the nomadology presented by DG.

Braidotti's (2011, 2013) nomadic subject is situated in a globalized, multiethnic society in which ongoing human migration from economic periphery to center brings issues of power embedded in difference to center stage. Braidotti allies herself with postcolonial, antiracist, and feminist theorists who emphasize power, difference, and the politics of location. By location, Braidotti is emphasizing not so much coordinate place, but rather situatedness within various social, economic, ethnic, and gender statuses. In this regard, Braidotti and Haraway (1988) are closely aligned. Braidotti proclaims, "The world begins with Donna Haraway—the manifestos of Haraway should all be read" (Braidotti 2016). Braidotti's emphasis is on difference in itself as a means to develop alternative concepts of the subject.

Braidotti (2011) situates nomadic subjectivity as an antidote to the history of "difference as perjoration." Difference is a central concept in Euro-Western thought that derives from legacies of dualistic opposition; that is, difference in the European tradition has historically been a difference *from*. Braidotti argues that, in Euro-Western theory, difference "has been predicated on relations of domination and exclusion" and, referencing Simone Beauvoir, "Difference has been colonized by power relations that reduce it to inferiority" (138). This orientation—difference as inferior other—was brutally actualized in the European context of the Nazi Holocaust. Braidotti, with deep roots in the post-structuralist philosophical tradition, refers to Foucault when she writes that "thinking through Auschwitz has become a historical imperative for all European

intellectuals" (138). Nomadic theory is Braidotti's effort to think through difference and to develop alternative models to dualistic and pejorative binaries.

As noted in Chapter I, what is at stake with the emphasis on subjectivity is the need to develop concepts that acknowledge and address contemporary, global conditions. Braidotti (2013) is concerned that critical theory continues to lag behind contemporary global transformations and states that "this is why the issue of subjectivity is central to this book: we need to devise new social, ethical, and discursive schemes of subject formation to match the profound transformations we are undergoing" (12). *The Posthuman* (2013) argues, though, that nomadic subjectivity needs more conceptual support. Braidotti claims that social and political movements of postmodernism are the symptom of the crisis of the subject; additionally, they are also the expression of alternatives. These two iterations of present conditions demonstrate "the crises of the majority and the patterns of becoming of the minorities" (37–38). Posthumanisms are multiple and represent myriad approaches to the crisis of the subject; rather than merely critiquing humanism, posthumanisms "create other visions of the self" (38).

The figure of the posthuman is developed with emphasis on its non-human, non-anthropocentric embeddedness. Braidotti calls for a posthuman subjectivity that consists of an enlarged sense of interconnection between self and others, including non-human or "earth" others (2013, 48). She notes that relating to others—both human and nonhuman others—is enhanced by a rejection of self-centered individualism. For Braidotti, the critical posthuman subject is defined within "an eco-philosophy of multiple becomings, a relational subject constituted by and in multiplicity, that is to say a subject that works

across differences and is also internally differentiated, but still grounded and accountable" (49).

An Ethics for the Here and Now

A posthuman ethics is one that is fit for the contemporary world. Given present political, geographical, societal conditions, Braidotti (2013) calls for "an ethics of experimentation with intensities" rather than adherence to a prescribed moral code (190). A posthuman ethics "implies a new way of combing ethical values with the well-being of an enlarged sense of community, which includes one's territorial or environmental interconnections" (190). Again, ethics is something that emerges as part of contemporary conditions. For example, contemporary bio-genetic capitalism creates a form of shared interdependence based on shared vulnerability, or in my terms, shared precarity and alienation (2013, 50). Rather than this reactive bond based on vulnerability (or precarity and alienation), Braidotti proposes an "affirmative bond that locates the subject in the flow of relations with multiple others" (50).

Because both desire and the posthuman subject—comprised of *zoe*/life itself—are generative and at the same time autopoietic, ethical relationships should be established on the positive grounds of joint projects and activities, not on negative or reactive grounds of shared vulnerability (Braidotti 2013, 190). Also, because subjectivity is situated, localized, and interconnected, rather than universal claims to moral standards, hyperlocal agreements are preferred by Braidotti. Braidotti refers to Genevieve Lloyd's explanation of such an approach as a "collaborative morality" (191).

Braidotti provides an approach for a posthuman ethics and emphasizes the importance of difference as the starting point for ethics. This approach is in contrast to

universalizing humanistic approaches that emphasize sameness or commonality. For example, in the case of refugees and German nationals in the town of Rendsburg, the power dynamics are highly unequal. While the KOTR project models itself on meetings "at eye level" (as equals), people who come to Germany seeking asylum exist in drastically precarious conditions. Even those who are granted asylum receive only three years of guaranteed rights to live in Germany. Many other asylum seekers exist in a perpetual state of limbo awaiting their approval or denial. The applications of thousands of other asylum seekers are rejected and these people then live in a state of "Duldung," the official government word for toleration until their expulsion (expulsion is the official German term for deportation) has been processed. The Duldung period can go on for months or years, as can the asylum application review process. The collaborative morality proposed by Lloyd is necessary in Rendsburg, as individuals interact across vastly different circumstances.

A Posthumanist, Everyday Urbanism

Braidotti's work in *Nomadic Subjects* (2011) and *The Posthuman* (2013) does not emphasize place or space as such in the development of subjectivity or ethical actions. What is emphasized throughout is the need to operate collectively from shared locations, whether physical, political, psychological, intellectual, or otherwise. Also emphasized is the fundamental importance of creative acts and visionary commitments in order to transcend negativity. Again, rather than a focus on lack or shared vulnerability, a posthuman ethics is an affirmative ethics; it is a vision of a sustainable world that is actualized in a perpetual state of becoming.

While design, building, and dwelling in the everyday urban environment are not directly specified as sites of or sources for the generation of possible futures, Braidotti (2013) does emphasize that a posthuman ethics requires one to redefine their connection to a "shared world, a territorial space: urban, social, psyche, ecological, planetary as it may be" (193). Braidotti also mentions that the posthuman subject is linked to a variety of others that enter into and extend beyond the body; these others include the environment and technological artifacts (193).

In summary, while the built environment is not a centerpiece of the text, *The Posthuman* (2013) establishes a vital materialist ontology that calls for that development of a collective ethics that includes non-human, non-biotic, and manufactured materiality of all kinds. This ethical approach understands subjectivity as co-emergent with self and other phenomena such as time, space, and other beings. From this perspective, ethical relationships form and evolve within specific times, circumstances, and places.

Refugees in Germany and elsewhere are living through what no one should—they have lost their livelihoods, their loved ones, and their very place on Earth. In addition to an ethical imperative to engage with the ongoing refugee crisis, there is much to be learned from the ways in which refugees and host country citizens are working in solidarity to create spatially and socially integrated communities. The KOTR, in my experience, fosters the development of one sort of collective ethics that includes engagement with everyday, urban places. The Kitchen itself, as an object out of place, instigates engagement in and with urban spaces (Figure 4.11).

Closing Notes—Dabke and Dancing in September

By the end of my few weeks in Rendsburg, it was clear to me that a community was starting to form. Familiar faces would stop by to say hello at the start of the cooking event evenings, and I recognized people from earlier events at the open events on Fridays and the weekends. However, it was also clear that some substantive issues were emerging. As a matter of policy, the KOTR team tries to create balanced distribution of refugees, migrants, and German nationals at the events. However, there was some criticism that not enough effort was being made to include people who had come from Africa and were still living at the government refugee facilities. This split between people from African backgrounds and people from Syria was apparent in several ways during the cooking events, one of which was in the way that different kinds of music were received.

Figure 4.11 September 6, 2019: Young people playing together at the Schnippeldisko in Rendsburg.

One of the primary local volunteers, Daniel (originally from Ghana, but a German resident for about twenty years) attended most events. As a professional DJ, Daniel enjoyed playing American soul and R&B music, such as the song, "Dancing in September" by Earth, Wind, and Fire. While these genres are arguably among the most danceable types of music, few people would dance when this kind of music was playing,

despite Daniel's efforts to get people moving. There was much more interest in dancing to dabke music, which comes from Arabic countries, including Syria. While this preference alone might not have been too much of an issue, it was accompanied by other unspoken divisions.

During one cooking evening, Daniel pointed out to me that the Syrians were not eating the FuFu he had prepared. Daniel had worked to prepare the food throughout the evening with his wife, Adamma, while several of us took turns holding their toddler son, and he was hurt and upset that people would not try the food. Adamma, also expressed concern to me in private. I watched and did notice it was so, but again, this issue could have been one of cultural preference. These unspoken divisions continued at the events, though Daniel made sure that the KOTR team was aware of the issues. We discussed the concerns in my interview with Peter, a the KOTR team member. Peter agreed that there were issues of racism at play, noting that racism is everywhere and this is one of the places where they work through the issues.

These sorts of micro-racisms mirror the larger societal issues of integration in Germany. While the war in Syria prompted Chancellor Merkel's refugees welcome policy, refugees and migrants also arrive from numerous other countries. Since 2015, Syrians have comprised about half of the total refugee arrivals. The other primary countries of origin include Afghanistan, Iraq, and Eritrea (UNHCR, n.d.). These diverse countries of origin complicate processes of refugee integration at all levels, including at the very local level, in which people attempt to build new lives and relationships.

CHAPTER V. POSSIBILITIES FOR PLURIVERSAL URBANISMS

Instigating **Communities of Solidarity—Negotiations with Ongoing Colonial Legacies in Urban Places**

Indigenous Urban Resurgence

In 1987, ten leaders of the Christian Churches of the US Pacific Northwest delivered a formal letter of apology addressed to "the tribal councils and traditional spiritual leaders of the Indian and Eskimo peoples of the Pacific Northwest," care of Jewell Praying Wolf James (Blevins et al. 1987). The letter was signed by leaders from Catholic, Lutheran, Methodist, Presbyterian, Episcopalian, and United Church of Christ denominations in the region. The histories of the apology letter do not include the story that led to the letter, but the story is this: In 1987, one state-level faith leader in Washington had asked Jewell James and Kurt Russo what he could do to help with a particular campaign to protect old growth forest of cultural significance to the Lummi people (Russo 2021). Kurt and Jewell responded that *all* the Churches could help by apologizing for the harms they had caused the Indigenous people of the Pacific Northwest.

The letter itself was only the first of many acts of apology. In October 2017, thirty years later, at the first Totem Pole Journey (TPJ) event I attended at the community center on the Lummi Reservation, a pastor from the same Lutheran denomination that had signed the letter led the group in a prayer with our hands on the totem pole. In June 2019, at the TPJ event on the Puyallup Reservation, another Christian representative spoke about the apology and his church's ongoing commitment to work in solidarity with the tribal communities of the Pacific Northwest. Several faith leaders of a nonprofit

organization called Earth Ministry were also in attendance. These Christian leaders were later present at the rally I attended on the shores of the Salish Sea in Blaine, Washington, in September 2019, at which an Indigenous-led campaign to protect the Salish Sea was launched.

The 1987 Christian leaders' apology has been acted out in all of these places and events. The letter marked the beginning of an ongoing commitment to work in solidarity. The Christian leaders attend events, lobby for political change, and acknowledge their ongoing roles in legacies of colonization and oppression. These acts offer event participants who may have had no sense of the historical context an invitation to participate in pluriversal solidarities. Importantly, the letter and subsequent actions not only include an apology for past harms, but they also affirm the *spiritual sovereignty* of Indigenous peoples of the PNW:

> As the Creator continues to renew the earth, the plants, the animals, and all living things, we call upon the people of our denominations and fellowships to a commitment of mutual support in your efforts to reclaim and protect the legacy of your own traditional spiritual teachings. To that end we pledge our support and assistance in upholding the American Religious Freedom Act (P. L. 95–134, 1978) and within that legal precedent affirm the following: (1) The rights of the Native Peoples to practice and participate in traditional ceremonies and rituals with the same protection offered all religions under the Constitution. (2) Access to and protection of sacred Sites and public lands for ceremonial purposes. (3) The use of religious symbols (feathers, tobacco, sweet grass, bone, etc.) for use in traditional ceremonies and rituals.

> The spiritual power of the land and the ancient wisdom of your indigenous religions can be, we believe, great gifts to the Christian churches. We offer our commitment to support you in the righting of previous wrongs: to protect your people's efforts to enhance Native spiritual teachings; to encourage the members of our churches to stand in solidarity with you on these important religious issues; to provide advocacy and mediation, when appropriate, for ongoing negotiations with State agencies and Federal officials regarding these matters. . . . May the God of Abraham and Sarah, and the Spirit who lives in both the cedar and Salmon People, be honored and celebrated. (Blevins et al. 1987)

This acknowledgement of *spiritual sovereignty* makes *pluriversal solidarity* possible. It also opens spaces of possibility for people from various migrant and settler backgrounds to develop an understanding of the agential capacities of the more-than-human world, including the personhood of orcas and the communicative capacities of places.

As I have described, people who attend the TPJ events stand together and place their hands on the totem poles in prayer and contemplation. Through these acts and various other ceremonial activities, people engage with each other in ways that produce what Kurt Russo calls *relational space* and *liminal space*. Whatever their personal spiritual beliefs—if they have any—standing together with hands on the totem poles is an act of solidarity and, I would suggest, an act of faith. It is a demonstration of the possibility of a world where many worlds fit.

Standing together in prayer and contemplation is *a* beginning, but it is by no means the only necessary act of solidarity. However, finding a place to start is a

necessary part of the process of addressing ongoing settler colonialism. Many American settlers and migrants are unaware of the extent of Indigenous genocide enacted by the federal government—and the American people. Who and what is to blame for this lack of awareness is an important question, but some antidotes are provided by celebrating Indigenous lifeways and engaging the settler public's consciousness—and conscience—in public, urban places. The TPJ is one initiative within a growing movement of urban Indigenous resurgence. Another example is provided by the Dancing in the Square Powwow, an annual event in Portland, Oregon.

At the 2017 Powwow, Joe Finkbonner (Lummi Nation), then Executive Director of the Northwest Portland Area Indian Health Board, the organization that hosted the powwow, welcomed everyone to the day:

> Let me tell you how this event got started. It got started twelve years ago when I was having dinner with my wife and some of her friends, . . . Americans from around the United States. And they were unaware that Indians were still around. . . . And I thought, that's a shame, that people had lived in Portland for ten, fifteen, or twenty years and didn't know that Indians were still around. . . . I pledged to myself and my wife that I was going to have a powwow in the heart of Portland so that people could hear us, see our culture, and know that we are alive and *thriving*. (pers. comm., September 2017)

The crowd responded with cheers, applause, and pounding drums. The Powwow's success and endurance over the fourteen years since its founding demonstrates one of many possible kinds of Indigenous resurgence within urban settings. The Powwow

illuminates Joe Finkbonner's claim that "we are alive and we are thriving" in a celebration of music, dancing, food, and camaraderie.

One could argue that the projects I have described here do not address deeper structural issues, but I disagree. These projects do not solve every problem, but they do open the space for structural shifts to emerge and for settler and migrant populations to support Indigenous resurgence. For example, as I mentioned in Chapter III, the TPJ event at California Academy of Sciences opened with a presentation by Corrina Gould of the Sogorea Te' Land Trust. Corrina told the crowd of approximately one hundred people about her organization's work to buy back Indigenous land in the San Francisco Bay Area through the support of voluntary "land taxes" donated by residents of the region (pers. comm., June 9, 2019). The TPJ event provided a high-profile platform for Sogorea Te' Land Trust. Real Rent Duwamish in Seattle operates on a similar principle of voluntary contributions from individual urban dwellers.[9] Governments are also beginning to voluntarily return land to Indigenous groups. The City of Eureka's historical decision to return Duluwat Island in 2018 was one of the first such decisions (Greenson 2019). Projects such the TPJ and Dancing in the Square, which continually raise awareness of Indigenous culture and sovereignty, help to develop collective support for the return of lands to tribal communities, and they build a culture of solidarity across tribal and non-tribal communities through which many other efforts are pursued.

Joe Finkbonner's story is indicative of the extent of Indigenous erasure from the everyday lives of non-Indigenous Americans. This erasure is a strategic component of ongoing settler colonialism, which Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) reminds us is a "genocidal

[9] https://www.realrentduwamish.org/

policy" (6), not any sort of accident or a phenomenon limited to Portland. The Dancing in the Square Powwows that Joe Finkbonner instigated bring tribal practices into the center of the city of Portland and re-Indigenize *Pioneer* Square, the space at the downtown center that is often referred to as the city's living room. The Powwows create a place for people from various tribal traditions to celebrate their cultural traditions together. They are also an opportunity for people of Indigenous heritage who live separated from their hereditary community to engage in Indigenous cultural practices. Lastly, they invite non-Indigenous peoples to learn about and participate in Indigenous cultural practices and remind non-Indigenous people that we live in a settler colonial state.

American cities continue to take a central role in the apparatus of U.S. settler colonialism. Since the nation's founding, U.S federal policy toward Indigenous peoples has evolved from violent war and treaty making to a policy of assimilation (Dunbar-Ortiz 2014). The General Allotment Act of 1887 (known as the Dawes Act) was passed as one of the primary instruments by which the federal government sought to enact the assimilation goal. The Act functioned as designed, prompting large-scale migration away from traditional tribal lands and reservation lands to urban areas (Dunbar-Ortiz, page 157; Peters and Andersen 2013, page 168). Later, the 1956 Indian Relocation Act (Public Law 949), incentivized the movement of Indigenous people to urban centers by providing housing and jobs. Native people who had entered the labor market during the labor shortages of World War II had found themselves again excluded after the war. The Indian Relocation Act provided a means to regain paid work and resulted in the movement of one hundred thousand Native Americans to urban areas during the 1950s through 1970s.

As Dunbar-Ortiz (2014) notes, though, this migration to urban centers fostered the development of urban Native cultural and political movements:

> This project gave rise to large Native urban populations. . . . Yet many of these mostly young migrants were influenced by the civil rights movement emerging in cities in the 1950s and 1960s and began their own distinct intertribal movements organized around the urban American Indian centers they established. In one of the largest of the relocation destinations, the San Francisco Bay Area, this would culminate in the eighteen-month occupation of Alcatraz in the late 1960s. (174)

The Relocation Act, in seeking to assimilate Native Americans, perhaps inadvertently supported the roots of today's urban Indigenous resurgence.

The TPJ leaders are constantly undertaking these consciousness-raising efforts that cross Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities, but they are not alone in their work. The TPJ's alliances with Christian leaders and leaders of environmental organizations such as the Sierra Club help solidarity to build across contemporary environmental and social concerns while foregrounding the importance of repairing these legacies of violence and oppression. The Dancing in the Square Powwows and the TPJ events instigate communities of solidarity, and there must always be more that follows.

Places of Oppression and Places of Refuge

As Braidotti has noted and I have mentioned in earlier chapters, "the refugee crisis is the history of European colonization coming home to roost" (Braidotti 2016). While the majority of refugees arriving in Germany in the past five years have not been fleeing countries that were historically colonized specifically by Germany, broader European legacies of violence, dispossession, and destabilization undoubtedly continue to

inform present-day. In addition to the colonial legacies forcing people to escape other countries for refuge in Europe, the legacy of the Holocaust and Nazi histories in Germany directly inform the country's touted "refugees welcome" stance. The German Constitution (Grundgesetz) of 1949 established the legal foundation for asylum seekers in the country. Article 16 of the German Constitution outlines the right for people facing political persecution to seek asylum in Germany.

In 2016, as part of my research trip to Germany with the PUARL team, Sabine Scherer, a county government employee, provided our team with instruction in the German legal context of refugee integration. Sabine explained the ongoing sentiment behind this part of the constitution: "We Germans will pay for our guilt to have sent away so many by offering political asylum" (Scherer 2016). Sabine also commented that Germans' support for refugees came in part from this collective sense of responsibility to repair Nazi legacies.

In August 2019, as part of my effort to assess the scope of grassroots refugee initiatives, I participated in a three-hour walking tour of Berlin, led by a Syrian refugee named Mohammed. The organization he represented, Refugee Voices Tours, exists to make clear the connections between European histories of conquest and current global crises:

> We draw parallels between Europe's own history of revolutions, wars and migration to create a relatable dialogue around what it means to be a refugee in 21st Century Europe and what issues lie at the heart of one of the most contentious topics of our time. (Refugee Voices Tours, n.d.)

Mohammed's tour emphasized the connections between the present-day situation in Syria and the Nazi legacy of Germany. During the tour, Mohammed drew parallels between demonstrations for political freedom that took place in Berlin and the demonstrations in cities in Syria. He explained how workers and political activists in both communist-controlled East Germany and communist-controlled Syria were brutally silenced.

As he talked, we walked through the city, and Mohammed showed us memorials and monuments that documented Berlin's violent past. We arrived at a walkway along an empty lawn, and Mohammed explained, "Here we are also going to talk about the big empty place" (Mohammed, pers. comm., Augsut 24, 2019). Mohammed explained that the "big empty place" before us was the site of the primary security building for the Nazi party. The highest officials had worked in this building. When the Nazi party had been defeated, one high official had escaped to Syria, and there he helped to create the current political system of oppression in Syria until his death in the mid 2000s. While I have not verified the specifics of this story, the point here is that Mohammed and his organization are making clear how the oppressive regime that took over in Germany used similar tactics to the oppressive regime in control in Syria. Refugee Voices Tours builds connections between people in Berlin and Syria through the everyday city spaces of Berlin. The place helps to tell the story that Mohammed shares with us.

As in the United States, issues of ignorance and erasure are pervasive. Refugee Voices Tours, like the TPJ, the Dancing in the Square Powwow, and the Kitchen on the Run, operates with a goal of developing awareness and an ethical consciousness to act in solidarity. The tours of Berlin and the KOTR events *instigate* communities of solidarity, and there must always be more that follow.

Negotiating Indigenous and Nomadic Theories—What Design Theory and Practice Can Do

As I discussed in Chapter II, posthumanisms and the geophilosophies that Deleuze and Guattari (DG) present in *A Thousand Plateaus* (*ATP*) (1987) have inspired criticism from anti-colonial scholars (King 2017). Bignall and Rigney (2018) provide a more thorough critique of the conceptual issues behind these criticisms than is provided by King (2017). These authors also address some of the concerns raised by Watts (2013), stating: "posthumanist theory at times risks the elision of Indigenous cultural and intellectual authority by remaining blind to the ancient presence and continued force of Indigenous concepts of human being" (160).

DG's figure of the *nomad* lies at the center of these sorts of criticisms of posthumanist theories. The figure of the nomad has garnered criticism from scholars concerned that it perpetuates a colonialist account of Indigeneity. Bignall and Rigney (2018) take up this issue in an analysis of both DG (1987) and Braidotti's (2011, 2013) use of the term nomad. Bignall and Rigney acknowledge that DG insist that it is *thought* itself that is nomadic. Because thought and philosophical concepts are mobile and composed of assemblages, which are themselves connected to outside elements, this type of thought is characterized by movement—it is nomadic. The concept of nomadic *thought* is not intended to suggest that nomadic *peoples* exhibit a particular form of thought. Rather, DG present nomadic thought in contrast to *sedentary* thought, which is a type of thought characterized by fixed categories dictated by those in power, against which other categories are judged as inferior or superior.

This sedentary thought is the foundation of difference as perjoration, which I include in my discussion of Braidotti's nomadic thought in Chapter IV. Sedentary thought resists the kinds of transformation that DG argue is inherent in thought itself (Bignall and Rigney 2018, 171). DG and Braidotti advocate for nomadic thought as a more accurate figure of thought itself and as a politically necessary approach to countering sedentary thought.

Bignall and Rigney (2018) recognize that DG's figure of nomadic thought is not a metaphor for thinking like nomadic peoples. They are concerned, though, that DG do indeed associate the figure of the nomad with actual Indigenous people and with Indigeneity throughout *ATP*. Bignall and Rigney share two primary concerns regarding *ATP*'s "Treatise on Nomadology." First, they are concerned with DG's suggestions that Indigenous peoples practice deterritorialization in resistance to the formation of a state. Deterritorialization, according to the Bignall and Rigney, is not a form of resistance. Rather, detteritorialization is a condition imposed by imperial forces as a method of dispossessing Indigenous peoples of their traditional territories. The concern is that DG neglect the long history of imperial claims that colonized lands are *terra nullius*—land belonging to no one—and thereby available to appropriate.

Second, Bignall and Rigney (2018) are concerned that *ATP*'s use of the "nomad war machine" concept implies that Indigenous political structures constituted "smooth space," that is, space that is without law or governance. They clarify that, contrary to these implications, Indigenous societies operate within a variety of sovereign political structures (174). The authors note that DG are aware that of the diversity of political systems in various Indigenous cultures. (DG refer to the Hopi people as an instance of a

non-nomadic society.) While this dissertation does not work with DG's concepts of nomadic war machine and deterritorialization, I include Bignall and Rigney's critique here to illuminate the complexities of the concerns that anti-colonial scholars find with DG's work and with posthumanist scholarship inspired by DG.

For Bignall and Rigney (2018), although DG are clearly focused on the creation and use of *concepts* and not on an anthropology of any particular culture, DG's references to Indigenous cultures and political structures does warrant some critique: "The problem that concerns us here is that, in constructivist philosophy, a concept receives its determination through the affections it receives from proximal concepts" (174). Bignall and Rigney explain that DG's association of nomadic thought is analogous to derogatory and oppressive conceptual depictions of Indigeneity, such as stereotypes of Indigenous peoples as irrational, lawless, or primitive.

However, despite the concerns, Bignall and Rigney (2018) close their essay with a presentation of the potential ethical uses of nomadic thought provided by Braidotti. Braidotti argues that DG's and her own contributions to posthumanist philosophy—including the figure of nomadic thought—offer powerful antidotes to the imperialist legacy of Euro-Western philosophy. Braidotti insists that her work, along with DG, contributes to ongoing decolonial efforts. Doing so relies on nomadic thought that can precipitate "'joyful acts of resistance and gentle but resolute betrayal' to conceptual assemblages originating in the imperial West" (Braidotti quoted in Bignall and Rigney 2018, 176).

I recognize the roots of King's (2017) concern in this demand for "resolute betrayal." Braidotti and DG's efforts to overturn sedentary or State/Royal thought open

possibilities for all sorts of futures. These possibilities could foster scenarios that "lead to genocide" as King warns. However, I disagree that there is any kind of necessary correlation. As I understand them, DG and Braidotti advocate for transversal modes of thought and subjectivity—thought and subjectivity that come from movement across, with, and through the world. Where these transversal modes lead is not predetermined. Rather, the route must be negotiated with the collective. Bignall and Rigney also close their critique in affirmation of the possibilities for liberation and ethical reconfiguration offered by the "improper" use of nomadic theory as suggested by Rosi Braidotti, who, referencing DG, calls for the creation of transversal conceptual and political alliances along a particular axis that can support transformation "for a new earth and a new people to come" (Bignall and Rigney 2018, 177, in reference to DG). Again, this is no metaphor, but a call for an ethics that uses all allied tools available to create new modes of existence.

In this dissertation, I have argued that everyday, participatory, urban practices are sites of theory production. Both posthumanist theory and Indigenous philosophies of place could benefit from more attention to the specifics of contemporary life in and with the built environment. Subjectivities develop within a context of historical, cultural, and material conditions. Current urban conditions in general need to be included within posthumanist and Indigenous theories, but specifically, I suggest that participatory urban activities offer methods for negotiating subjectivities and solidarities in a pluriversal collective. More broadly, the humanities and social sciences could benefit from more engagement with the design fields. These fields specialize in critique, and the affirmative methods of figuration and critical theory "beyond negativity" developed by Braidotti and

Haraway are fairly unique within these disciplinary realms. In contrast, the design fields dwell within the affirmative. Design is the active practice of envisioning alternatives to existing conditions. Design modes of thinking exceed discursive thought and can contribute to methodologies that offer better accounts of nonhuman agency and sensorial experiences.

Pluriversal Design Theory and Practice

Three additional possibilities for design theory and practice emerge from this project: sympoietic design, design for resilience, and design in solidarity.

Sympoietic Design

In Chapters I and II, I introduced Donna Haraway's (2016) concept of sympoiesis. Sympoiesis (making with) is, in many ways, how designers already work. The building of towns, cities, and places is never an individual effort. Here, though, I want to focus on how a sympoietic sensibility could inform what happens after design and construction have ended. Sympoietic approaches could be summarized as design *with* rather than design *for*. In essence, I am suggesting that designers might reconsider assumptions about how space users/occupants actually inhabit public, urban spaces. A sympoietic sensibility might inspire new forms of co-design in which users become designers and builders themselves, or new forms of design that result in more engaged experiences between the users and inhabitants of particular urban places and the places themselves. Existing volunteer stewardship models for public spaces are a starting point, but the caretaking of the majority of urban public places—sidewalks, plazas, nature parks, and playgrounds—is the responsibility of municipal employees or landscaping companies rather than engaged urban residents.

Initiatives such as the City Repair Project[10] have a long history of implementing sympoietic design approaches at the very grassroots level through, for instance, "intersection repair" work that includes painting colorful murals on the pavement at the intersections of residential streets. However, co-design and building approaches need not always proceed within a grassroots, natural building aesthetic. In fact, I suggest that some of the limitations of co-design approaches as currently practiced is the limited aesthetic sensibilities that they employ. Sympoietic design could instead make use of emerging technologies. Part of the process could include design professionals helping participants develop competencies with emerging design and building tools. The endless possibilities include the rapidly growing field of 3D printing for construction, which has the potential to transform construction methods and dramatically expand the range of who can design and build (Lubell 2021).

Design for Resilience

Design for resilience is another way of saying that urban design is one important point of intervention for developing collective capacity to cope with increasing instability, precarity, and uncertainty. Urban designers can take lessons from participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms to embed more flexibility, adaptability, and creativity into the public realm. These changes can take place at the practical level; for instance, rather than assuming unlimited water supplies through irrigation for landscaping, design for the public realm could be driven by a goal of regenerating groundwater or collecting water on site for multi-species benefits. These changes can also include a more fundamental rethinking of the public realm. For example, designers can

[10] https://cityrepair.org/

commit to creating a public realm that can provide support and refuge for humans and the more-than-human world during any number of disasters or crises.

The present times demand these kinds of responses, as demonstrated by the conditions in the Pacific Northwest in the last year alone. The region has experienced unprecedented heat waves, wildfires, dangerously poor air quality from wildfire smoke, and the endless challenges brought on by the COVID-19 pandemic, all of which have placed extreme burden on those facing housing insecurity, food insecurity, and health vulnerabilities. Design for resilience should include a commitment to create a public realm that not only provides space for movement and leisure, but that can adapt as needed to offer life-supporting resources such as electricity, bathroom facilities, shade, medical assistance, temporary shelter, food, and water for humans and nonhumans alike. Design for resilience should embed multi-functionality and adaptability into every aspect of the public, urban landscape.

Design in Solidarity

The theories and case studies I have examined here demonstrate that dominant approaches to planning, design, building, and dwelling proceed within a set of Euro-Western ontological and epistemological assumptions that even Euro-Western science recognizes as outdated and incomplete. Interrogating these dominant forms of design, building, and dwelling with the conceptual richness of the pluriverse can support urgently needed design for resilience and sympoietic design. In addition to the ethical imperative to work in solidarity for Indigenous resurgence, the first necessary movement is for urbanist theory and practice to recognize that they proceed according to particular worldviews that are historically and materially contingent and culturally informed. The

next necessary movement is for theorists, practitioners, and those who simply dwell in the built environment to begin developing cross-cultural, ontological, and epistemological literacies. The third necessary movement is for all of us to work in solidarity across, with, and through this pluriverse of ontological diversity to address the increasingly urgent issues of our times.

Participatory, informal, temporary urbanisms are one of myriad methods for instigating these three possibilities for urban design theory and practice. Urban scholars, practitioners, and dwellers can examine how the ontological and epistemological underpinnings that inform their approaches lead to the sorts of worlds we live in now. They—and we—can practice pluriversal thinking, designing, and building in solidarity across ontological, cultural, and political difference. From here, many worlds are possible. I echo Escobar's (2020) hope that even another possible is possible

What Stories Tell Stories

In closing, I return to the discussion about stories I started in Chapter II, where I shared Thomas King's (2008) and Vanessa Watts' (2017) origin stories of the woman who fell from the sky. I also shared my agreement with Donna Haraway (2016) that it matters which stories tell stories. Thomas King writes about how stories form us. We actualize them in our everyday lives. According to King, our collective stories are what "we continue to elaborate as we fill up our tanks at the gas station, . . . the lie we dangle in front of our appetites as we chase progress to the grave" (28). If King's claims are accurate, and I think they are, then our everyday lives are just the place to make new stories. As King warns, though, knowing a story bestows on us an obligation—and sometimes an inspiration—to act differently.

Perhaps making new stories can instill a propensity for collective care, mutual aid, and solidarity. We could make more stories like Rebecca Solnit's (2009) about how disaster and disruption inspire people to come together in particular places to care for each other and the wounded world. We could learn from King's (2008) and Watt's (2017) stories of Sky Woman that one possible first reaction to chaos and pain is to reach out rather than recoil. As you may recall, the birds who noticed a woman falling through the sky flew up to catch Charm, for her sake and for everyone's sake. (The birds and all the other animals did not, for example, watch from a distance, run away in fear, or shoot her out of the sky.)

King (2008) wonders, "What kind of a world might we have created with that kind of story?" (28). To this end, King offers the story of Charm to readers Indigenous and non-Indigenous alike:

> Take Charm's story, for instance. It's yours. Do with it what you will. Tell it to friends. Turn it into a television movie. Forget it. But don't say in the years to come that you would have lived your life differently if only you had heard this story.
>
> You've heard it now. (29)

Here is what I would like to do with the story Thomas King (2008) has shared about Charm (Sky Woman). For me, the story of Charm is a story of the beginning of the built environment. It is a story of working together across ontological difference to address an urgent, precarious situation. Charm fell from the sky and had nowhere to live. Charm and the animals worked together with the mud from the bottom of a very deep sea that the Earth had made. The animals and Charm and the mud (the Earth) conducted a

ceremony to build a new kind of world. This story provides a set of principles for design: (1) design is a collective enterprise, (2) design includes the more-than-human world and the Earth itself, and (3) design requires an element of ceremony and magic (creativity).

With the help of the magic (creativity) that came to them through ceremony, Charm, the animals, and the Earth built a new kind of home for the animals and the humans, too. The first act of design and building was a sympoietic act.

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