

Article

A Queer/ed Archival Methodology:

Archival Bodies as Nomadic Subjects

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ABSTRACT

This article highlights the particular—embodied—ways in which the human record can be collected, organized, and preserved. Engaging both archival and queer theories, the understanding of body-as-archives and archives-as-body is instantiated in the oral history record from one genderqueer poet. This poet’s narration can be understood as a nomadic one of multiplicities, undoings, and metamorphoses. The far-reaching possibilities of the ongoing histories of the simultaneous becoming and unbecoming – archived (un)becomings – are at play and embodied throughout this archived oral history. The archives can produce a dizzying effect through which, I argue, archivists can resist the urge to settle, to neatly organize, and to contain the archival records to consider new ways to understand and represent the dynamic (un)becomings. Through the interpretive frame of the nomadic, the archives can be understood as a site of (un)becomings and as a space that can hold moving living histories.

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“I’m afraid I can’t put it more clearly,” Alice replied very politely, “for I can’t understand it myself, to begin with; and being so many different sizes in a day is very confusing.”

“It isn’t,” said the Caterpillar.

“Well, perhaps you haven’t found it so yet,” said Alice; “but when you have to turn into a chrysalis—you will some day, you know—and then after that into a butterfly, I should think you’ll feel it a little queer, won’t you?”

“Not a bit,” said the Caterpillar.

“Well, perhaps your feelings may be different,” said Alice; “all I know is, it would feel very queer to me.”

“You!” said the Caterpillar contemptuously. “Who are you?”

Which brought them back again to the beginning of the conversation.

- Lewis Carroll, *Alice’s Adventures in Wonderland*, p. 67-9.

JAMIE: *Are you ready?*

TC: *I guess.*

JAMIE: *I conducted this Trans Workshop and we came up with a list of questions that we all asked each other and one of them is to introduce yourself and to tell how you self-identify. Everybody identifies differently and it’s important to see how we don’t all fit under an umbrella of sorts.*

TC: *[He nodded six times and adjusted his sunglasses.] Okay. Um. My name is TC Tolbert and I identify as genderqueer. I identify as queer. And maybe even more than those things, as a poet and a teacher. So, in terms of my genderqueer identity, for me, that’s really about feeling very happy to have been born in the body that I was born in, which is female, and incredible grateful for my experience as a woman—growing up as a woman, living as a woman. And really feeling like my transition, which has just been taking testosterone, has just allowed me to foreground another part of myself without, hopefully without erasing what came before. And so, for me, I feel pretty comfortably situated in both genders, even though I know the world sees me as a guy.*

- Archival Record from Arizona Queer Archives, oral history conducted by Jamie A. Lee with TC Tolbert, Tucson, Arizona, 30 April 2010. Archived as part of the Arizona LGBTQ Storytelling Project Collection.

INTRODUCTION

Queer. Feeling queer. Performing queer. Archiving queer. Accessing queer. I begin with the juxtaposition of TC's archival record alongside Alice's exchange with the Caterpillar to call attention to the work that queer does in and through bodies that, although marked and fixed with identity, are in states of becoming. This juxtaposition of human bodies, as well as the archives—what I understand as the *archival body*—that collect and preserve them, allows me to articulate the queer and the archival, two seemingly distinct and opposing constructs; one dynamic, the other held and preserved and, therefore, considered relatively static. However, both Alice and TC, as bodies, are in multiple states of always becoming and unbecoming. As each second passes, bodies shift, bodies prioritize (or not) identities and their performances, and bodies know and are known; this takes place through change, which is emphasized temporally. While Alice expresses pain in being confused about her changing self, especially as she is 'so many different sizes' in such a dizzying rate of transformation, TC expresses his multiple identity formations as 'queer' and 'genderqueer' and even prioritizes being a 'a poet and a teacher.' He recognizes his comfort being situated in both genders and with being perceived in the world as 'a guy.' Within the notion of *always becoming*, space and time hold bodies momentarily. As both archivist and archival scholar, I recognize that 'holding' and 'preserving' have been traditionally stressed as the stabilizing goals of the archives; however, Terry Cook makes urgent the need to recognize the adaptability of archival thought "as constantly evolving, ever mutating as it adapts to radical changes in the nature of records, record-creating organization, record-keeping systems, record uses, and the wider cultural, legal, technological, social, and philosophical trends in society."¹ The archives holds bodies, records, collections, and bodies of knowledge that shift in contents and contexts posing challenges to notions of stability.

The archives grows and expands as it accumulates collections and makes them accessible to multiple communities. The archives becomes queer (or not) as it works to hold and preserve TC's shifting histories and Alice's shifting experiences. Engaging in critical archival reflection on records and collections as *moving* might indicate, then, that archival records—"the foundational concept in archival studies"²—may be continually changing and, therefore, might be considered momentary.³ Considering, then, as records

¹ Terry Cook, "What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift," *Archivaria* 43 (1997): 20.

² Michelle Caswell, "'The Archive' is Not an Archives: Acknowledging the Intellectual Contributions of Archival Studies," *Reconstruction 16.1 ARCHIVES ON FIRE: Artifacts & Works, Communities & Fields* (2016): 9.

³ Alana Kumbier, *Ephemeral Material: Queering the Archive*. (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2014).

are held and preserved as evidence of human activity, dynamism unsettles the predominant notions that records are fixed, which, in turn, may upset the views of evidence and truth and also intervene in the role assigned to archives as “houses of memory.”⁴ While such ideas of dynamic archives may challenge the archival studies and information studies disciplines, they are not new phenomena.⁵

Examined through a framework of the body, the archives highlights the particular—embodied—ways in which the human record is collected, organized, and preserved. Engaging both archival and queer theories, the understandings of body-as-archives and archives-as-body can be instantiated in the oral history record from one genderqueer poet whose narration can be understood as a nomadic one of multiplicities, wanderings, and metamorphoses. The far-reaching possibilities of the ongoing histories

⁴ See Terry Cook, “What is Past is Prologue: A History of Archival Ideas Since 1898, and the Future Paradigm Shift,” *Archivaria* 43: (1997) 18. Cook draws from the discourse of the former National Archivist of Canada, Jean-Pierre Wallot, to highlight the goal for archivists to build such spaces for capturing and holding collective memory but through Cook’s own emphasis on recognizing the power that circulates through such a culturally-bound goal for the nation-state and its citizens.

⁵ For example, see: Anne Gilliland, “Afterword: In and Out of the Archives,” *Archival Science* 10: (2010) 333-343; Gilliland and Sue McKemmish, “The Role of Participatory Archives in Furthering Human Rights, Reconciliation and Recovery,” *Atlanti: Review for Modern Archival Theory and Practice* 24, (2014): 78-88; Michelle Caswell, “Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives,” *Archival Science* 14 (2014): 307-322; McKemmish, “Placing Records Continuum Theory and Practice,” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 333-359; Tom Nesmith, “Still Fuzzy, But More Accurate: Some Thoughts on the ‘Ghosts’ of Archival Theory,” *Archivaria* 47 (Spring 1999): 136-150; Terry Cook, “Evidence, memory, identity, and community: four shifting archival paradigms,” *Archival Science* 13 (2013): 95-120; Verne Harris, “Archons, Aliens, and Angels,” in *The Future of Archives and Recordkeeping: A Reader*, ed. Jennie Hill, (London: Facet Publishing, 2011); Frank Upward, “Structuring the Records Continuum—Part One: Postcustodial Principles and Properties,” *Archives and Manuscripts* vol. 24(1996): 268-285; Kimberly Anderson, “The Footprint and the Stepping Foot: Archival Records, Evidence, and Time,” *Archival Science* 13 (2013): 1-23; Terry Cook and Joan Schwartz, “Archives, Records, and Power: From (Postmodern) Theory to (Archival) Performance,” *Archival Science* 2 (2002): 171-185; and Eric Ketelaar, “Tacit Narratives: The Meanings of Archives,” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 131-141. Also consider LIS scholars: Catherine F. Brooks and Stacy L. Young, “Emotion in online college classrooms,” *Technology, Pedagogy and Education* 24 (2015): 515-527; and Steven Bethard and Jonathan Parker, “A Semantically Compositional Annotation Scheme for Time Normalization,” Proceedings of the Tenth International Conference on Language Resources and Evaluation, European Language Resources Association, Portoroz, Slovenia (2016); and what is slowly emerging from the areas of machine learning, artificial intelligence, and natural language programming making the move from the database-driven model to hypothesis-driven model of searching.

of such archived (un)becomings⁶—the simultaneous becoming and unbecoming—are at play in this archival record and throughout the archival body. Multiple histories—those known, imagined, and surprising—emerge and expand as new records and collections are accessioned.

The archives can produce a dizzying effect. As an archivist, I want to resist an urge to stabilize the records into skillfully accessible collections in order to consider new ways to understand and represent such dynamic bodies that produce records and are produced by records. The oral history interviews that I have collected of queer- and trans-identified individuals are the focus of this article; however, I focus on one oral history interview to more intensely consider the reconfigurations and (un)becomings over time that can influence the ways bodies and archival bodies become culturally legible.⁷ Through the interpretive frame of the nomadic, the archives, and the bodies that constitute them, can be understood as shifting sites of (un)becomings. Such sites can hold nomadic and expanding histories as *stories so far*.⁸ This dynamic framework informs the Queer/ed Archival Methodology, Q/M, that I have developed in order to be attentive to bodies in motion, archival and otherwise, and nomadic subjectivities—those meandering ways of knowing and being.

The Q/M is a flexible methodology that can guide archival thinking and, especially, archivists to critically engage their daily archival work and, importantly, to inquire into the efficacy and material consequences of selected archival processes and methods. Although archivists may follow Terry Cook's call to focus on archival 'processes'⁹ over 'products,' archival standards and dominant paradigms continue to constrain bodies and histories that are in the process of being lived because archival attention continues to focus on the 'product,' the processed, described, and accessible collections and records. Mounting backlogs challenge the time and reflection needed to engage the archives as dynamic.

⁶ In *(un)becoming*, I utilize the parenthesis to suggest the momentary capture of identity through the simultaneous becoming and unbecoming processes. See Jamie A. Lee "Be/longing in the Archival Body: Eros and the 'Endearing' Value of Material Lives," *Archival Science*, 16 (2016): 33-51.

⁷ Gilles Deleuze and Félix Guattari, *A Thousand Plateaus* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1987), 88.

⁸ I engage bodies through Adela C. Licona's work on discursive performances from the border as stories-so-far and bodies-so-far in her keynote address titled "*Mi'ja, just say you're a feminist like you used to...*": *Pa/trolling & Performing Queer Rhetorics in the Everyday* at the Queering Spaces/Queering Borders Queer Studies Conference at University of North Carolina-Asheville, April 2013. Licona draws from Doreen Massey's book *For Space* to consider space as *stories so far*.

⁹ Terry Cook, "Evidence, Memory, Identity, and Community: Four Shifting Archival Paradigms," *Archival Science* 13 (2013): 95-120.

Such critical awareness within archival productions is urgent so that archival practices do not reproduce neocolonizing categories or further subjugating conditions. As bodies and archives tell *stories so far*, practices that can represent ongoing change are integral. In what follows, I ask: as an archival methodology, how might Q/M guide archivists through processes of archiving in ways that might maintain a level of unsettledness to leave translation and interpretation open? How might the Q/M make urgent the call for shared archival knowledges to open up the archivists' repertoire of methods and tools so as to support archives as always becoming?

Archivists are working thoughtfully through rapidly changing information environments—technologically, socially, culturally, and economically—to connect and apply archival practices within their own archival productions. Although listing the creative and critical archival work being done is beyond the scope of this article, re-imagined and critical archival practices are emerging in, for example, zine archives, transgender archives, community archives, human rights archives, and especially through post-custodial efforts. Archivists are sharing their experiences through webinars, at conferences, and in publications while Twitter conversations through #critlib and the SNAP Roundtable highlight the first-hand experiences with archival practices. I recognize that archivists are mixing methods to make their work relevant for their distinct archival communities. In this article, I argue that the Q/M can guide archivists through self-reflexive archival thought to re-imagine and critically evaluate their archival productions. Considering the role of sharing archival knowledge in times of change, archivists can learn from one another throughout their applications of the Q/M. Beyond offering archival methods and practices, this methodology offers a more individualized and flexible consideration of distinct archives and their needs. Through queer and archival theory to frame archival thought, archivists need not fear instability and change.

QUEER/ED ARCHIVAL METHODOLOGY

Wonderland = A Peripatetic Archives

In Wonderland, Alice becomes larger and smaller, but always in relation to what she just was or is just becoming. As philosopher Gilles Deleuze ponders, the simultaneity is the paradox—that contradiction—in which bodies might affirm moving in both directions and at the same time. The simultaneous 'bigger' and 'smaller' identity markers are contingent on the previous and subsequent moments and movements. For Alice, this dizzying experience is unsettling in ways that it is not for her interlocutor. Caterpillar's mode of being and becoming is always already defined by metamorphosis as it moves through its stages toward becoming butterfly. This state of (un)becoming is quite simply the state of being for the caterpillar. Because the archives already holds such bodies in/of ongoing transformation, the archives resides in Alice's Wonderland and in Deleuze's

paradox. I incorporate Rosi Braidotti's nomadic theory of becoming, which stresses the importance of being open to a non-unitary vision of the subject, to suggest that bodies are always on the move temporally and spatially.¹⁰ In my ongoing work as archivist and scholar, I challenge linearity and the reliance on grand metanarratives to describe the summation of human experience; therefore, my theoretical and practical engagement with archives must also depart from linearity and hegemonic understandings of human experience in order to be open to what might be possible. I argue for archival considerations of multiply-situated subjectivities as identity markers. I understand Alice's dizzying unsettledness as a key component to recognizing what is, what was, and what might be. TC's oral history interview is also intricately connected to spatiality and temporality through his knowing of his multiple selves—female, male, and the overlapping identities that are continually shifting—through lived and living experiences. Past, present, and future intersect, overlap, and become the other. Living in the midst of ongoing transformation may be exhilarating, yet for archivists, the task of “representing these changes...and engaging productively with the contradictions, paradoxes, and injustices they engender is a perennial challenge.”¹¹ The Queer/ed Archival Methodology, Q/M,¹² calls archivists and archives to practices that can consider the possibilities for such simultaneous (un)becomings.¹³ Embodied archives highlight the bodily structure of subjectivity inside and outside of the subject—the human body and the archival body. Therefore, embodied archives can offer analyses of the interrelations between self and society and can thereby be imagined and configured to remain in the paradoxical openness—the unsettledness—of multiple possibilities.

A Q/M highlights the multi-layered, multi-dimensional, and always in motion—nomadic—subjects and subjectivities. Such archives can be understood as both a location

¹⁰ In *metamorphoses*, Rosi Braidotti's nomadic theory of becoming maps what becoming might look like. Deleuze too incorporates temporality and spatiality in his understanding of *becoming*, “which divides itself infinitely in past and future and always eludes the present...These are not three successive dimensions, but two simultaneous readings of time” (Braidotti, *metamorphoses: Towards a Materialist Theory of Becoming*, Cambridge, UK: Polity Press, 2002, 8). The nomadic subject is one that moves and exists, therefore, *among* temporal multiplicity. I consider how minds change and that, through efforts to re-frame archival productions, alternate histories and alternate identity markers emerge from spaces that had often been overlooked and quieted by notions of authorized practices and access.

¹¹ Braidotti, *ibid.*, 1.

¹² I engage Q/M as a shortened way to name Queer/ed Archival Methodology with the forward slash in *queer/ed* to represent the moving between a present and past tense verb. The slash ‘/’ for me also represents (un)becoming through the taking apart and simultaneous coming together which I consider always with implications on embodiment.

¹³ Jamie A. Lee, “A Queer/ed Archival Methodology: Theorizing Practice through Radical Interrogations of the Archival Body.” (Phd. Diss., University of Arizona. 2015), 60.

and a practice.¹⁴ As a location, Q/M considers *archives*¹⁵ those professionally managed repositories that collect, appraise, preserve, and make accessible for archival users. As a practice, the archives and the acts of archiving are the techniques and technologies¹⁶ that might perform stories and memories. I draw on Lisa Jean Moore's and Jeffrey Mathias' definition of the body to refer to both the material "flesh and bone, histories and entanglements, suffering and illness, capabilities and desires, life and death" and "the locus of identity and social structure...the integral link between individuals and broader historical and social processes."¹⁷ In this work engaging bodies and archives, there is certainly an obsession with 'the flesh,' although, here the body also encompasses greater and more pliable, dynamic structures. By embodiment, I mean the ways in which we know and move in the world.¹⁸ I, therefore, understand embodiment as a process, which is important in archival contexts as archives continue to collect and describe records and collections that grow, shift, and may become meaningful over time. Archives, like bodies, are always becoming and unbecoming. Finally, a Q/M considers *queer* as both a practice and a politics of mis/recognizing, critiquing, and challenging stable categories of collection, recollection, identity, and ideas of belonging as they have become embodied, normativized, and often invisibilized.¹⁹ As a queer practice and politics of archival research, I call forward LGBTQI voices, but with an expansiveness for many distinct non-normative multiply-situated peoples and communities. Queer functions here to offer the queer/ed archives multiple possibilities about whose bodies and what bodies constitute

¹⁴ Chela Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 2000) and Adela C. Licona, *Zines in Third Space: Radical Cooperation and Borderlands Rhetoric*, (Albany, NY: SUNY Press, 2012).

¹⁵ See the Society of American Archivists website for definitions offered by practicing archivists as well as archival scholars who are beginning to recognize the paradigmatic shift of archives as well as what constitutes the archives in the 21st century:
<http://www2.archivists.org/glossary/terms/a/archives>

¹⁶ Eric Ketelaar, "Tacit Narratives," 135. Also see Nikki Sullivan, "The Somatechnics of Perception and the Matter of the Non/Human: A Critical Response to New Materialism" *European Journal of Women's Studies* 19 (2012): 299-313.

¹⁷ Lisa Jean Moore and Jeffrey Mathias, "Embodied Knowledge" in *The Blackwell Encyclopedia of Sociology*, (Malden, MA: Wiley & Sons, Ltd, 2016), 1.

¹⁸ Nikki Sullivan and Samantha Murray, "Introduction: Originary Somatechnicity" in *Somatechnics: Queering the Technologisation of Bodies* (Ashgate Publishing, 2009), xii.

¹⁹ See: José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics* (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999); Siobhan B. Somerville, *Queering the Color Line: Race and the Invention of Homosexuality in American Culture* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2000); Nikki Sullivan, *A Critical Introduction to Queer Theory* (New York: NY: NYU Press, 2003); Jasbir K. Puar, *Terrorist Assemblages: Homonationalism in Queer Times* (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 2007); Elizabeth Freeman, *Time Binds: Queer Temporalities, Queer Histories* (Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2010).

it. This work allows for the recognition that such bodies are simultaneously producing and being produced by the bodies of knowledge that are 'captured' (momentarily) and in the process of being preserved within the archives. It is through engagement, articulation, and relation in and through time that bodies become and unbecome. It is inside the queer and queer/ed archives, then, that the ever-changing archival bodies and bodies of knowledges can tell competing and contradictory stories of desires, erotics, fears, traumas, violences, and lived truths through ephemeral and material renderings of everyday living.

Theorizing bodies that produce the records, collections, and bodies of knowledge that make up archives, I suggest that the unhinging of the hierarchies of knowledge, the record, as well as the archivist, produces and activates queer and queer/ed imaginings as integral to the Q/M. All of those acts together make the queer/ed archives action-oriented spaces. *Queer/ed archives* are understood here as those spaces through which meaning is made in order to demonstrate the converging and diverging relationships that records and records creators have with dominant and normativizing metanarratives. The archives as queer/ed are, importantly, those spaces that are committed to deploying *queer* as a practice and a politics to work on and within the archives as an act of intervention. Queering archives is a deliberate move to intervene in those practices that have become unnoticed and invisibilized within the archivist's everyday productions to question and upset the normative archival structures that continue to uphold and reproduce exclusionary hegemonic power dynamics through adherence to grand metanarratives that tell one story and often from the perspectives of those with privilege. The queer/ed archives is both intelligible as archives and queer—both/and—and there exists a productive tension that offers archivists and visitors to the archives ways to imagine the possibilities of "queer multimodality as a function of both a recovered and an emerging history of queer materials lives."²⁰ Archivists can play distinct roles in supporting and sustaining the archives without foreclosing archival dynamism; through the Q/M and its flexible perspective, archivists are invited to question their ongoing practices to develop alternates to practices that may no longer be relevant within their own archival contexts. Rather than a fear of archival instability, the Q/M supports the shift toward a more individual and granular approach to archiving along with the openness for archivists to share knowledge with one another about the efficacy of methods, mixed methods, practices, and their material implications in and through communities of records creators.

²⁰ Jonathan Alexander and Jacqueline Rhodes, "Queerness, Multimodality, and the Possibilities of Re/Orientation," *Composing(media) = Composing(embodiment): Bodies, Technologies, Writing, the Teaching of Writing*, eds. Kristin L. Arola and Anne Frances Wysocki. (Logan, UT: Utah State University Press, 2012), 189.

Methodology <through> Metamorphoses

The Q/M emerges from my research in the Transgender Archives in Victoria, British Columbia, Canada; virtually through online conversations with Tone Hellesund, the founder of the Skeivt Arkiv being developed as the first state-sanctioned queer archives in Norway; and through my hands-on work to develop the Arizona Queer Archives, AQA, the state's LGBTQI collecting archives in the Institute for LGBT Studies at the University of Arizona. When I first started building the AQA in 2011, I felt the urgency for self-representation, participation, social justice, and equity, which all fit well with the LGBTQI communities with whom my work was focused. I was wary of the ideas of just one history and one narrative summing up such distinct lived experiences. When I first interviewed LGBTQI peoples for the oral history collection, I found myself falling into a line of questioning that was predicated on normative (homonormative) understandings of identity.²¹ In this moment of self-awareness as archivist and member of the LGBTQ communities, I then began to critically question my own steps and methods to build the AQA.²² Upon reflection, the archives was imbued with dominant structures, traditions, paradigms, and pressures pushing at the recording and archiving processes themselves. These pressures are often not easily recognized, but through ongoing reflection and consideration of dominant structures and patterns of representation, archivists can push back on and resist these and similar dominating constraints on the archives and the archival record.

For example, as an archival record that I collected and made accessible through the AQA, consider the structuring of TC's interview. Let me step through the technological processes. The interview was recorded on Panasonic 64min digital videotape with a Panasonic DVX-100A professional video camera in standard definition 24p and 4:3 aspect

²¹ For an investigation into community-based archival productions, see Michelle Caswell's considerations of the 'archival imaginary' as the "dynamic way in which communities creatively and collectively re-envision the future through archival interventions in representations of the shared past." Identifying distinct and multiple histories is not enough but calls archivists to recognizing the various lenses as also structuring logics of past and future which continually co-create one another through time. Michelle Caswell, "Inventing New Archival Imaginaries: Theoretical Foundations for Identity-Based Community Archives," *Identity Palimpsests: Archiving Ethnicity in the U.S. and Canada*, ed. Daniel Dominique and Amanda S Levi, (Sacramento, CA: Litwin Books, 2014), 49.

²² Jamie A. Lee, "Beyond Pillars of Evidence: Exploring the Shaky Ground of Queer/ed Archives and their Methodologies" in *Research in the Archival Multiverse*, ed. Anne J Gilliland, Andrew Lau, and Sue McKemmish (Clayton: Monash University Press, 2016). See also: Vladan Vukliš and Anne Gilliland, "Archival Activism: Emerging Forms, Local Applications," *Archives in the Service of People – People in the Service of Archives*, (2016): 14-25; and Gilliland, "Permeable Binaries: Societal Grand Challenges, and the Roles of the Twenty-first-century Archival and Recordkeeping Profession," *Archifacts*, (December 2015): 12-30.

ratio. It was then imported into Final Cut Pro where it was compressed and exported as an H.264 streaming QuickTime movie at 300Kbps in a 320 x 240 framesize. It was then uploaded into the AQA²³ Omeka open-source website and described using Dublin Core metadata elements that I identified as the most important for the oral history collection and access from outside researchers. TC's lived histories and (un)becoming body of knowledge are accessible through the points of reference that I selected and described. My situated perspectives as an archivist, scholar, and developer of the Q/M offer a structuring framework for how TC's stories might be understood by someone accessing his interview online. The mediated structuring of the interview itself, the processing of the multimodal product, the describing and organizing of the content and context, and the accessing of the media through the Internet highlights the processes of such archival productions. Each step may produce and shape TC's (un)becoming archival body; the mediated process of the oral history interview influences TC's archival collection and his body of knowledge that will then be preserved and made accessible in archival productions. Each step may be shaped through metamorphoses working in and through the engagements with the archival body.

My desire for a queer/ed archival production emerged for me from a realization that normative practices can haunt archival processes and collections through appraisal, description, and making the collections accessible. I wanted the AQA to include shifting and even competing ideas of what it means—has meant—to be LGBTQI across time and space. I learned the most from my engagements with transgender and queer communities. One story could hold competing histories. I was called to imagine a space and a practice open enough not to foreclose the possibilities of an ongoing queer world-making space simply because I could not see it or imagine it; collaborating in and with the communities that constitute the collections is integral to a queer/ed archives. I also learned by being attentive to the ways interviewers and interviewees reproduced normative assumptions that sometimes silenced and sometimes highlighted the non-normative. For example, in my role as interviewer of numerous oral histories, I recognized my own practices and lines of questioning opening up more nuanced responses about what it has meant to be LGBTQI; I no longer ask about when the interviewee 'came out' but instead offer questions to elicit responses that support becoming as an ongoing process.

As the archives moves, changes, and is reimaged, the need exists for a Q/M to guide archivists through the unsettling technological, societal, and cultural shifts in what might be considered standardized concepts and practices of archival productions. As a methodology, the Q/M operates as a flexible framework to work through bodies as

²³ Arizona Queer Archives online repository: <http://www.azqueerarchives.org>

naturalistic instruments²⁴ to open up conversations and decisions about distinct archival productions and then, importantly, to inquire into the efficacy of such methods. My aim is to offer, instead of a loosely applied approach or a set of methods or tools, a way of thinking about and through knowledges and communities that can underpin archival scholarship, notions of archives, and approaches to archival work. I believe that a methodology is fundamental to archival processes and productions and to archival developments as a guide through the “logic that links the project’s ontological and epistemological approaches to the selection and deployment of these (archival) methods.”²⁵ Methodology and method are distinguished by their scope given that “methodology is a theory and analysis of how research does or should proceed...” and “method is a technique for (or way of proceeding in) gathering evidence.”²⁶ Importantly, for the Q/M and its own unsettling foundation of seemingly mismatched queer theory (focused on ongoing intervention as a move to unhinge taken-for-granted and reductive assumptions) and archival theory (focused on persistence and fixity²⁷), methodology “frames the questions being asked, determines the set of instruments and methods to be employed and shapes the analyses.”²⁸ The methodology is present throughout and supports the policy creation and the methods that the archival communities have deemed necessary for this work.

The archivist has a role to interrogate and reflect upon practices, methods, and strategies related to both *thinking about* and *doing* archives. For example, the appraisal methodology supports the archivist through the processes of determining the value of records. Methodology helps to guide the archivist through the interstices of subjective and objective determination while also being attentive to the past, present, and future movements of archival models starting with the *1898 Manual for the Arrangement and Description of Archives*, which “introduced foundational organizational principles such as original order and *respect des fonds*.”²⁹ Archival scholars are confronting the very notion of the record through their own community productions that call forth the necessity for

²⁴ Yvonna S. Lincoln and Egon G. Guba, *Naturalistic Inquiry* (Newbury Park, CA: SAGE Publications, 1985), 192.

²⁵ Kath Browne and Catherine J. Nash, “Queer Methods and Methodologies: An Introduction,” *Queer Methods and Methodologies: Intersecting Queer Theory and Social Science Research* (Surrey, England: Ashgate Publishing, 2010), 11.

²⁶ Sandra Harding, *Feminism and Methodology* (Bloomington, IN: Indiana University Press, 1987), 2-3.

²⁷ Anderson, “The Footprint,” and McKemmish, “Placing Records”.

²⁸ Linda Tuhiwai Smith, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples* (London: Zed Books, Ltd., 1999), 143.

²⁹ Michelle Caswell, “‘The Archive’ is Not an Archives...” 2016, 7.

such a dynamic queer/ed methodology in early archival processes such as appraisal.³⁰ Emphasizing motion within archives might then open up different conceptions and embodiments of time that are central to conducting appraisal³¹ in order to maintain a level of unsettledness for a more comprehensive archival translation and interpretation. Appraisal relies on processes and steps for archivists to examine and evaluate records for their enduring value. I make the move to also connect the affective contextual structures to elicit 'endearing'³² value as important to developing and sustaining archives. The archivist does not merely have to figure out if a record or collection will have enduring value for generations to come, but might also consider the emotional connections that communities, especially non-normative and marginalized communities, might have with records. To promote archival sustainability and ongoing relevancy, the Q/M as a methodology offers a self-reflexive framework to move archivists through efforts to investigate practices and methods, especially those that are part of the invisibilized everyday repertoire. Consider the Q/M an internal and reflexive inventory-taking of archival practices and procedures.

Relating to the archives and the archival processes, methodology serpentine both through the thinking about and the doing of archives. The Q/M,³³ in its most current iteration, emphasizes seven distinct areas of focus:

1. Participatory Ethos—What does participation mean and look like in and through the communities of records creators?³⁴ How does participation influence the archives? What entry points for participation can archivists develop in order to be inclusive and support the specific archives' mission, vision, and collection policy?
2. Connectivity—How is the archives connected to community and/or institution? What flexibility is built into the relationships among archival stakeholders and records creators? What levels of agency and autonomy are built into the archival processes? What is the role of the archivist in maintaining relationships?
3. Storytelling—As the archives are constituted by many and multiple stories, how might a storytelling emphasis take shape through archival practices? How does storytelling expand participation in and beyond community contexts? What role

³⁰ Jeannette Bastian, "'Play Mas': Carnival in the Archives and the Archives in the Carnival: Records and Community Identity in the US Virgin Islands," *Archival Science* 9 (2009):113-125.

³¹ Anderson, "The Footprint," 2012.

³² Lee, "Be/Longing..." See the entire 2016 *Archival Science* Special Issue on Affect and the Archives/ Archives and their Affectivities.

³³ Jamie A. Lee, "A Queer/ed Archival Methodology: Theorizing Practice through Radical Interrogations of the Archival Body," (Phd diss. University of Arizona, 2015) 188-215.

³⁴ Michelle Caswell, "Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach to Records Documenting Human Rights Abuse: Lessons from Community Archives," *Archival Science* 14 (2014): 308.

does the archivist play in collecting and documenting stories? What other possibilities might be developed to ensure the inclusion of multiple knowledges and meaning-making practices?

4. Intervention—Revisit the archival collections to embark on a collaborative process of interrogating and understanding the collections alongside the communities they portend to represent. Consider what stories are being silenced in the not telling. What haunts the collections? What strategies might archivists consider to expand contextual knowledge about historical matters that might constrain records and bodies of knowledge over time?
5. Re-framing—A key approach that connects to community and performance as valuable in understanding and expanding the notion of preservation as linked to practices of remembering and forgetting.
6. Re-imagining—A transdisciplinary approach that directly connects to human rights archives and practices of social justice so that archivists can recognize and be attentive to complex pasts to then re-imagine new possibilities for a present and future that will incorporate rather than disavow the causes of social inequality.³⁵ How might the archivist work within their own archival productions to re-configure categories to make archives more attentive to sexuality, race, class, gender, sex, ability, and geography so as to be wary of shifts in meanings?
7. Flexibility and Dynamism—Queer theory is important throughout the Q/M as a flexible and dynamic framework. Archivists might ask themselves, ‘what is an ideal configuration’? The Q/M is intended to be dynamic as archivists will be re-configuring the shape and structure to keep it relevant to communities, technologies, timescapes, emotions, and social, technical, cultural formations.

Within each focus are theoretical and practical applications, examples, and a list of questions for the archives’ representatives to respond to with critical and creative archival methods and strategies that align with distinct archival communities, needs, and goals. For this article, I engage *Re-framing* as an archival intervention that draws from queering to relate to temporalities and multiple understandings (over time) of archival structures as impermanent and *stories so far*.

(Un)becoming Archival Bodies

Poststructural and postmodern thought across the disciplines have influenced perceptions of humans, shifting from the Cartesian, unified, and mindful being to the

³⁵ Heather Love, *Feeling Backward: Loss and the Politics of Queer History*, (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2007), 71.

fractured subject.³⁶ Projecting the ideas of the fractured subject into the archive, Jacques Derrida wrestles with the changing nature of the archive by looking at what constitutes the driving principle of gathering together:

Consignation (in the archive) aims to coordinate a single corpus, in a system or a synchrony in which all the elements articulate the unity of an ideal configuration. In an archive, there should not be any absolute dissociations, any heterogeneity or secret, which could separate, or partition, in an absolute manner.³⁷

Through poststructural and postmodern thought, then, the archival body is no longer 'an ideal configuration.' It is not stable nor can it perform stability when it holds fractured and fracturing histories. Although fractured, the center does not necessarily cease to be a dominating force.³⁸ Bodies might emerge as alternative subjectivities still connected to dominant power relations, but emerging from within the cracks, those in-between spaces. The archival body as fractured might be a stabilizing force that is necessarily contingent and relational.

Through the Q/M's *Re-framing*, the archivist is called to take a second look. For example, TC's oral history record highlights for me the nomadic subjectivities of the archival body through his transitioning body and embodied practices as woman and man. The archives holds all of these embodied subjectivities and ways of knowing himself. In appraisal and description processes, the archivists must read and re-read the archival records to gather the many relevancies of moving between male and female. TC explains what genderqueer means for him:

So, in terms of my genderqueer identity, for me, that's really about feeling very happy to have been born in the body that I was born in, which is female, and incredible grateful for my experience as a woman—growing up as a woman, living as a woman. And really feeling like my transition, which has just been taking testosterone, has just allowed me to foreground another part of myself without, hopefully without erasing what came before. And so, for me, I feel pretty comfortably situated in both genders, even though I know the world sees me as a guy.

³⁶ Sandoval, *Methodology of the Oppressed*, 16, as quoting Jameson from "Postmodernism, or the Cultural Logic of Late Capital," *New Left Review* 164 (1984): 53-92.

³⁷ Jacques Derrida, *Archive Fever: A Freudian Impression* (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1995), 3.

³⁸ Braidotti, *metamorphoses*, 13.

TC tells of a linear progression from birth in a body that is ‘female’ through experiences as a woman and living as a woman. He pinpoints his physical transitioning as linked to ‘taking testosterone,’ which has ‘allowed’ him to focus on another part of himself. He does not state that this other part of himself is emerging through testosterone use, but suggests that this other part was already there. He connects the physical to the mental transitioning and being situated within *both* male *and* female embodiment(s). He is hopeful that this new foregrounding of another part of himself will not erase ‘what came before’—his female self. TC resides in the paradox—in the midst of past and future as well as female and male—feeling and knowing both at the same time while the world sees him ‘as a guy.’ In Wonderland, Alice, on the other hand, is unable to recognize the multiplicities of self but can identify the changes over time and retrospectively. The bodies of fracturing histories are themselves fractured or multiply situated with parts existing simultaneously in distinct times and spaces, much like Alice and TC. Archival bodies are always in the process of becoming.³⁹

As an archivist, consider *Re-framing* as a practice to look and re-look at the many angles of the contextual situated-ness of records and their records creators to be attentive to the structures (and even the threads) that uphold certain categories of belonging. Connected to appraisal and description, specifically practices of naming, *Re-framing* breaks down the overtly opaque archival performance *as archives* that often hides the archival labor responsible for archival productions so that trust and transparency can be foregrounded as “guiding principles for describing sensitive records and building metadata models.”⁴⁰ Q/M questions that guide such a *Re-framing* of the archives are: *What is the role of the archivist? What is the role of communities? How do archivists physically arrange a collection to make sense? And make sense to whom?* Such questions may not be new for archivists, but being situated within a queer/ed *and* archival methodology, these questions offer new ways of thinking through and about archival practices. Through longstanding archival approaches, such as respect des fonds, original order, and provenance, archivists are already working to read and re-read collections in ways to make them meaningfully accessible. As TC’s ambiguous body and identity are queer/ed and in states of transition, *Re-framing* might shift the power of classification to open up expanded ways of thinking about multiply-situated peoples and how their materials are interpreted, described, and translated in order to be and remain relevant through time. Provenance, for example, has been critiqued by archival scholars to:

³⁹ Gilliland, “Afterword,” 339; and Frank Upward and Sue McKemmish, “In Search of the lost tiger, by way of Sainte-Beuve: re-constructing the possibilities in ‘Evidence of Me...’.” *Archives and Manuscripts* 29: 22-42.

⁴⁰ Caswell, “Toward a Survivor-Centered Approach,” 211.

...focus on how to effectively represent the fluid and changing nature of both the external and internal structures of archival aggregations...disjunction between logical order based on administrative structure and the physical order that records assume over time...recognition of this disjunction has caused archivists to re-envision the archival fonds or aggregation as a conceptual rather than physical entity.⁴¹

Through *Re-framing*, then, the archivist invigorates the potential of a queer/ed openness in the archives through shifting the archival methods from a focus on strict physical order to one that might be namable conceptually⁴² and flexible enough to accommodate change.

Archival Practices as World-Making Efforts

Queer/ed archival work consists of world-making⁴³ practices—those practices through which individuals might create space where non-normative identities are not expected to conform but where processes of becoming might perform elusive subversions to identities as ways to engage in individual (un)becoming. A Q/M allows archivists to co-create that home space for non-normative bodies and histories to settle and unsettle, to move and be moved, to be legible and intelligible. Queer/ed archival spaces, therefore, can create and sustain distinct sociality, experiences, and ways of knowing. A Q/M must necessarily contend with multiple and competing voices while being both committed and resistant to containment so as to support an openness to the (un)becoming. Queer/ed archival spaces are treated here as spaces of both home and resistance for non-normative peoples and communities that are *always becoming*.

The historicity of archives suggests that those more powerful and privileged create, constitute, and even consume dominant archival perspectives on who and what is authorized and allowed to cross the threshold into the archives. The archives, then, might hold the supporting documents as well as the detritus of the privileged and

⁴¹ Terry Eastwood and Heather MacNeil. *Currents of Archival Thinking*, (ABC CLIO, 2010): 30.

⁴² David Bearman, "Recorded Memory and Cultural Continuity," *Archival Methods: Archives and Museum Informatics Technical Report*, No. 9, (1989) in which Bearman argues that records are not 'dead' but alive through the archivists' work as 'storyteller' in an ongoing environment of past, present, and future. Also see Francis X. Blouin, Jr., "Archivists, Mediation, and Constructs of Social Memory," *Archival Issues* 24, no. 2 (1999): 101-112, in which he argues that archivists must be attentive to changing of time, sequence, rhythm, pacing, and the movements that are occurring with the archives.

⁴³ José Esteban Muñoz, *Disidentifications: Queers of Color and the Performance of Politics*. (Minneapolis, MN: University of Minnesota Press, 1999), 23.

powerful to maintain the narratives about what is worthy of preservation—a past, a present, and a future. However, I argue that, through the flexibility of Q/M, archives can be understood as expanding and (un)becoming in order to hold multiple, even competing truths. In addition to offering up a usable framework and mode of thinking for contemporary archival work and study, Q/M is recommended to function as a means for critique and re-configuration of already existing archives. In relation to existing archives, Q/M has implications for history and, especially, multiple and even competing histories. Through implementing the Q/M, the collecting, preserving, and making accessible physical and digital material can expand the multiple accountings and lineages of meaning-making practices and knowledge productions to support archival constructions as spaces for the potentials for social justice.

My analysis of select oral history archival records from the AQA is attentive to the techniques of storytelling that are connected to remembering and forgetting and to the normative and non-normative embodied practices that LGBTQI peoples have historically processed and produced in order to be included in the archives. The complex oral history productions produce multiple and multiply-situated records and records creators who move sometimes rather seamlessly between dominant and non-dominant inquiries and response narratives. It is this complexity of relationships to the non-dominant and the non-normative in these oral history productions that makes urgent the ongoing development of a Q/M.

Although my contribution means to suggest that archival bodies collect, preserve, and make accessible those practices that through repetition have become invisibilized, naturalized, and normalized, I recognize that archivists continue to consciously expand that archival repertoire—those archival methods and practices that are most relevant for individual archives and archival contexts. Q/M aims to aid archivists and scholars by offering a queer and dynamic framework to interrogate archives and archival practices to be consciously attentive to contradictions, elisions, and erasures within records and collections.

Re-framing the Archival Bodies

Naming categories fail to hold bodies and histories. TC recounts his sixth grade memory of writing his first poem and the contextual elements that, especially when looking backwards, one might connect to a queering path. Without words to know one's self or ways to translate what one might know, there are gaps and spaces that one fills in from a future date. In these recollections, one claims one's memory and holds it as a queer/ed moment. TC shares his knowing of self through these navigations:

I played softball and tended to sort of fall in love—whatever that means—with my teammates. (LAUGHTER) I very quickly figured out that that wasn't okay. I remember writing my first poem out when I was in sixth grade and I was in love

with the third base woman. I was the shortstop and was just perfect! ...I wanted to express how I felt about her. I just didn't know how to do it and claim it. And say, 'This is how I feel about you.' And so I did this, you know, this poem where I talked about this guy and if he felt this way about this woman and how that might go. I remember feeling so proud of it and thinking, boy, I really said how I felt, but no one knows it's me. I showed it to my mom. I remember thinking 'she knows something—she knows this about me.' Because she was quite uncomfortable even though she was very supportive of me writing, she was just a little bit like 'who's this about?' 'Oh, I just made it up.' But I felt like that was a way that I could sort of get away with acknowledging something like that without entirely pointing the finger at myself.

In the very first sentence of this oral history record, TC falls in love and adds the disclaimer: 'Whatever that means.' As I argued elsewhere, archivists, "through queer/ed archival approaches that are attentive to the multiple lived experiences that constitute an archival collection, might recognize that archives contain 'different histories of transition between old and new modes of representation.'"⁴⁴ It is in such a transition that questions emerge that can unsettle and settle what is known, but also what is yet to be known. Considering how desire and belonging move people affectively toward others,⁴⁵ TC wants to express himself (herself, in 6th grade). Through appraisal and description, then, the archivist might ask 'what was considered 'normal' or 'appropriate' at that time?' TC's mother's reaction might sum up the time period and the place so that 'normal' behavior for a daughter is strictly categorized and may carry into the archival record as such. Through documentation strategies and oral history productions, how much do interviewees and storytellers fill in the blanks? What role does time play in the construction of the record? TC fills in the blanks from his seat by the pool two decades later. Time – past, present, and future—is always, as Deleuze suggests, entangled in an elusive present through which past and future create and consume one another.

TC's re-imagined recollections emerge and hold the movements through the normative and non-normative gender performances of his multiple and nomadic subjectivities. Archival records and collections reflect processes of living. Archivists who are able to embrace the metamorphoses of process—as opposed to adopting and adapting to the teleological and linear thrust toward static records as the sole outcome of archival productions—might then engage critically and creatively with the dynamic relationships among the archival functions and elements, creators, records, technologies,

⁴⁴ Lee, "Be/longing," 34. Also quoted is Jack Halberstam, *In a Queer Time & Place: Transgender Bodies, Subcultural Lives*, (New York University Press, NY: 2005), 104.

⁴⁵ Lee, "Be/longing," 37.

and structures. Critical engagements will not eliminate archival structures or standards,⁴⁶ but might open the archival processes to dynamic methodologies in order to elicit ongoing thought and interrogation into everyday practices.

Returning to Cook's call for a focus on the 'process,' the (un)becoming body moves through processes of becoming without aiming for the production of the *no longer becoming* body (the product); the outcome is the *story so far* (the process). In his interview, TC shares his experiences moving through both female and male and points to the ways he knows only retrospectively in his (un)becoming body.

What I notice now is, um, really (RAISES HAND EMPHATICALLY) it's the way that (SLIGHT PAUSE) as a guy (HAND MOVES TOWARD HIMSELF), there aren't as many visual cues. I know that those visual cues for women can be very limiting. Certainly for anyone, visual cues can be limiting. Um, but they're also a nice handy shortcut when you're in the grocery store. (LAUGHTER) You know, you get the sort of dyke nod (NODS AND LAUGHS), you know, or whatever it is. So, I don't experience that anymore. It's very rare that I will be walking down the street and I'll see, you know, any number of queer folks who will assume that I'm queer. Whereas before, having short hair that kind of thing, that was an assumption...And I find myself (LONG PAUSE) Hmmmm...I was gonna say alone or lonely in some instances and I, I think that's true, but I think that's also part of the gendered expectations for men in terms of interpersonal connections. And so, it's not that people don't talk to me or (LAUGHTER) that I am not talking to people. But the levels of intimacy, there are just different expectations for men and women that I knew theoretically as a woman and now I feel experientially as a guy.

Engaging with the world around him may be challenging when the social cues and embodied languages are new and emerging. TC compares his embodied knowledges as female and male. His testimonial offers a glimpse into his physical moving and knowing through space—through town and at the grocery store—while also his self-understanding in an ambiguous and changing body. In his oral history interview, the intersections of time and space suggest material consequences of being both male and female as well as being each male or female. His knowledge between the sexes and genders shifts emotional expectations in ways that constrict his openness. His archival record might be described contextually in a number of ways that will rely on the archivists' attention to temporality and embodied knowledges.

The stories that the archives tells reflect the ways that bodies are connected to their histories yet are in states of becoming. The challenges lie in how archivists and archival scholars think about processes well beyond the teleological consideration of

⁴⁶ Cook, "Evidence."

products. Archivists—as bodies (un)becoming themselves—must conduct bodily inventory-taking of their own practices to meet these challenges. The processes and “mental habits of linearity and objectivity persist in their hegemonic hold over our thinking.”⁴⁷ Archival studies scholars continue to focus on the processes in archival productions as key to making change.⁴⁸ The (un)becoming bodies influence the archival institutions that are expected to care for them. Here is where and when human bodies engage with archival bodies. In this work, practices and structures have been developed to not only conduct the labor of archiving but to also disseminate the trustworthiness of such an institutional production to hold and secure histories for generations to come.

Archival Bodies as Nomadic Subjects

In the processes of (un)becoming, there is work being done to organize and to configure bodies and bodies of knowledge into distinct forms that are intelligible and legible. Appraisal suggests value and description marks the record and collection. Intelligibility and legibility of nomadic subjects become momentarily affixed to and situated in locatedness and relational contexts. Understanding figuration⁴⁹ as a powerful piece of shaping and rendering one’s image—especially for this article in terms of a non-unitary vision of the subject as a dynamic and changing entity—can highlight the knowing of one’s own situated perspective. For archivists and archival scholars, being figured and configured and reconfigured aligns with Alice’s processes of becoming all in a single day. Dizzying perhaps. However, in the knowing of the self as nomadic subject and working with the records of nomadic subjects with shifting subjectivities opens up the process to creative re-imagining of what the archives does and can do and for whom.

I return to TC’s oral history record to highlight the self-knowing that TC expresses about how he is being read during his transgenering. He observes the shifting ways he is understood by others within the LGBTQI community as well as the greater community. In these observations, we, as archivists, can learn from the ways the records and the archival bodies perform, are consumed and used, and are interpreted. Being legible in the midst of both physical and contextual, TC’s oral history transcript highlights how one body, one body of knowledge, might reside in the midst of old and new truths as well as lived and contradictory embodiments. He continues:

⁴⁷ Braidotti, *metamorphoses*, 1.

⁴⁸ See Cook, “Archival Science and Postmodernism: New Formulations for Old Concepts,” *Archival Science* 1 (2001): 3-24; and Gilliland and Kelvin White, “Perpetuating and Extending the Archival Paradigm: The Historical and Contemporary Roles of Professional Education and Pedagogy,” *InterActions: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies* 5, no. 1. (2009): 15-16.

⁴⁹ Braidotti, *metamorphoses*, 13.

INTERVIEWER: How long does it take to do the cream everyday?

TC: The truth is, the best place to put it...well, you want to put it on a really absorptive area where it's not gonna get washed off, right? So, you could do it on the inside of your wrist or mucous membranes like in your nose, but no one's gonna put cream there because it's gonna rub off and there because it's in your nose. Um, and so the best place...his is hysterical!...is on your inner and outer labia. (LAUGHTER) I know, it's amazing! It's about that much cream. It's not very much at all. Each night before I go to bed, I put it on and, you know, it's just one of those ironies about the placement and what's happening, you know, all kinds of stuff.

Body as (un)becoming is body that is conceivably contradictory, ambiguous, and dynamic. TC's story resides in configurations that are dynamic and imprecise. He offers the term 'irony' as the way he understands his in-between body and ways of knowing. TC does not resist the complexities and contradictions of his one body. It is through archival practices, especially those naming practices, that the body is made legible or intelligible, accessible, and locatable in time and space...perhaps only for a moment and not long enough to cohere into a static or sutured identity. The nomadic subject is always moving.

EPILOGUE

I emailed TC on 24 April 2014 to ask him what questions he would want me to ask him if I were to interview him again as four years had passed since his initial interview. He wrote:

...Here are some things I often don't get asked, but sort of wish I would:

What has your trans identity taught you about love and/or community?

What is the most fun thing about being trans and/or transitioning?

In what ways is transness a gift?

Are there areas of your life/expression that have not been affected by your trans identity? If so, what are they?

TC's response moved him outside of his changing body and into a relational space through which engagement and interaction take precedence. Bodies (un)become, just as archives do. The archives as constituted by bodies of knowledge shares with bodies themselves the processes of selection and arrangement to make legible and visible only certain parts of the whole, but with the knowing that the whole contains traces of previous and future moments and movements. In developing archival collections, I have experienced the

shifting histories of living embodied individuals whose processes of telling also expand and contract the potential of the stories themselves. Consider the imposed dichotomous structures of being boy or girl, the dichotomies of male and female as well as feminine and masculine, that are regularly encountered in and beyond the archives. The normative structures are in us and around us – as bodies and as archives.

As bodies and archives transition and tell multiple stories and *stories so far* within bodies of knowledges, the archivist plays an integral role in archival development to interrogate their own default archival methods and strategies so as to become open to re-imagining queer/ed approaches. Challenging assumptions and questioning what has been taken for granted as ‘natural’ or ‘normal’ must necessarily carry into archival methodologies. Archival theorist Terry Cook suggests that arrangement within the archives must be understood as “not so much as a method for organizing records, but as an intellectual construct created through the archivist’s analysis of the numerous relationships that exist between records, creators, and functions.”⁵⁰ With a critical eye towards eliminating the tendency for essentialism and the reflection of universality, a Q/M offers creative ways to consider how personal collections might relate and refer to one another without the need for assimilation into one tidy narrative.

The Q/M, as nomadic and always becoming, cuts a more creative path through dominant ways of knowing and the discourses that support a grand narrative in archives; consider giving priority to the processes of intervening in the dominant model of how people know and understand themselves in the world and also in the archives. The Q/M functions as a means for critique and re-configuration of archival productions as they are being produced as well as those that already exist; the Q/M is a way of thinking about what constitutes the record that can underpin archival scholarship, notions of archives, and approaches to archival work. The Q/M is aimed to cast contemporary thinking about archives in particular and dynamic ways and is meant to aid archivists currently wrangling with socially just practices as well as to inspire emergent thinking about archives as evolving, living, and (un)becomings.

Alice’s experiences in Wonderland and TC’s stories with competing histories and multiple bodies offer instantiations of the argument I am making here. This understanding of body-as-archives and archives-as-body is revealed through TC’s ongoing transition from female to male. His narration is not linear and neat, but rather one of multiplicities and incompleteness. In his story, he refuses to stabilize his location or to locate himself precisely on one point of the spectrum of gender, sexuality, anatomy, and desire. He will not erase the female/woman within and continues instead to ground himself and his stories within his lived history as an embodied female. Embodied subjectivities and the archival bodies as nomadic subjects may be shared in ways through new and re-imagined archival descriptive practices that subvert assumed dominant structures of those static

⁵⁰ Cook, “What is Past,” 31.

archives and body in order to open up radical possibilities for social justice. The radical possibilities of ongoing shifting histories and the instabilities of (un)becoming are at play in the stories and records of the archives.

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