



Revisoning aging: Indigenous, crip and queer renderings

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Revisioning Aging: Indigenous, Crip and Queer Renderings

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Abstract

In this article, we re-imagine Anishinaabe,¹ crip and queer futures of aging against and beyond dominant successful aging narratives by drawing on our archive of digital/multimedia videos (short documentaries) produced in conjunction with

¹ Anishinaabe refers to a culturally and linguistically-related group of Original Peoples that includes the Ojibwe, Potawatomi, Oji-Cree, Saulteaux, and Algonquin Peoples. According to the Ojibwe People's Dictionary, Anishinaabe literally means a human as distinct from a non-human being (<https://ojibwe.lib.umn.edu/main-entry/anishinaabe-na>). There are also literal translations of Anishinaabe held by Elders and Anishinaabe communities. For example Basil Johnston provides the translation "people created from divine breath" (1990, p. 15).

older/e/Elder² persons and the Re•Vision: Centre for Art and Social Justice. These documentaries are directed and come from the lives of those older and e/Elder persons whose aging embodiments intra-sect with their Indigenous, disabled and queer selves. Disrupting hegemonic successful aging narratives, and specifically heteronormative and ableist trajectories of aging, these alternative renderings of aging futures offer rich, affective relationalities and cyclical timescapes of older experience that draw on the past even as they reach into divergent futurities. Anishinaabe, crip and queer aging emerge. While we discern resonances in relationalities and temporalities among and between the Anishinaabe and non-Indigenous stories, we also identify significant differences across accounts, indicating that they cannot be collapsed together. Instead, we argue for holding different life-ways and futures alongside one another, following the 1613 Two Row Wampum Treaty between the Dutch and the Haudenosaunee, in which each party promised to respect the other's ways, and committed to non-interference, as well as to the development and maintenance of relationship.

Keywords:

reimagining aging, arts-based research, Anishinaabe, crippled aging, queer aging, welcoming in dementia

² We use the term “e/Elder” to include both Indigenous Elders and Indigenous and non-Indigenous elders, recognizing that in Anglo-western cultures the term senior, for some people, has pejorative connotations and that in Indigenous cultures, “Elder” is a respected title bestowed not as a result of age but rather as a result of one's knowledge and actions. Indigenous Elders are recognized knowledge keepers who have earned the respect of their communities and nations through demonstrating wisdom, harmony and balance in their actions and their teachings (Stiegelbauer 1996).

Introduction

To watch the stories presented in our article, go to <https://revisioncentre.ca/revisioning-aging>. Following the prompts, type in the password: revisioning. Please note: these videos are intended for readers and classroom learning only and are not for broader public screening.

In “Queering Aging Futures” (2017), Lynn Sandberg and Barb Marshall call upon allies from disability studies and queer studies to queer aging in ways that open up cultural gerontology to alternative futures of aging—futures that are distinct from the many representations of hetero-happiness saturating mainstream media. Underlying these representations is what we call the dominant normative biopedagogy of “successful aging,” which germinated in the 1960s and was solidified by Rowe and Kahn in the 1980s (1987; 1997). Successful aging represents a biopedagogy in its issuing of expert advice and instruction for health and well-being imbued with moral implications for how people should act and what they should aspire to as they move into old/er age (Rail & Jette, 2015; Rice, 2014; 2015). In its contemporary enactment, this biopedagogy argues for “active” able-bodied aging with ongoing productivity, absent of both physical and mental decline. These instructions and aspirations not only circulate in representations but also interactions in doctors’ offices, financial institutions, care spaces, workplaces, families, and beyond. The characteristics of successful aging map onto success-failure binaries wherein the state encourages responsabilization on the part of individuals (Chivers, 2020), and capital abets in the selling of a never-ending array of anti-aging products and services (Aubrecht, et al., 2020; Calasanti, 2007; Ellison, 2014; Jacoby, 2011; Katz & Marshall, 2003; Weintraub, 2010). Success-failure

binaries include: active/sedentary; ability/disability; physical/non-physical; able-minded/dementia; anti-aging/aging; independence/dependence; financially secure/financially insecure. Each term to the left of the forward slash is the desirable and normative quality by which individuals should measure their aging selves, and subsequently reap the promised rewards for their adherence to the oftentimes impossible-to-achieve guidelines and advice for aging successfully.

In their respective and collaborative work, Sandberg and Marshall show how advertising reinforces hetero-happy futures of aging. For example, Sandberg's (2015) study of popular discourses in Sweden demonstrates how images of heterosexual coupledness engaged in active lifestyles are used to represent meaningful and positive later life; these are extended further into the future through images of hetero-kinship of grandparents with grandchildren. In their analysis of a US news story reporting on two daughters who staged weddings with their father who lives with dementia, Sandberg and Marshall highlight both daughters' investment in a hetero-perfect narrative of being a daughter who is walked down the aisle by her father and who gets to experience the "daddy-daughter" dance (2017, p. 6). Underwriting the attachment to these moments, they argue, is a heteronormative generativity that also secures intergenerational continuity. Adding to these hetero-futures, Marshall's (2017) examination of Canadian lifestyle magazines and health promotion materials found that another aspect of what we would call a successful aging biopedagogy is the claim that better sex can come with age if one follows the right lifestyle advice. With age, it is successful aging biopedagogies that both promise and secure heteronormative able-bodiedness, able-mindedness, better sex, financial security, and even future generations.

Left out of “successful aging” biopedagogies are Indigenous, disabled, and queer persons. The successful ager may be an unattainable position for all, but each of these groups is positioned even further outside the normative features of successful aging premised upon able-bodied and able-minded assumptions, and thus is made invisible (Westbrook & Saperstein, 2015) and/or deemed as having no future (Kafer, 2013): Indigenous persons because successful aging neither acknowledges nor values Indigenous aging within Indigenous contexts (Anderson, 2011a/b; Grande, 2018; Pace & Grenier, 2017; Ranzijn, 2010); disabled persons because the intertwinement of heteronormativity, able-mindedness and able-bodiedness disqualifies disabled lives as generative of desirable and whole futures; and queer persons because heteronormativity continues to disqualify queer life as generative of future generations.

Sandberg and Marshall acknowledge the need to queer aging, noting that “a queering of aging futures in critical gerontology should [...] involve further engagement with and affirmation of the narratives that provide alternative visions of later-life” (2017, p. 7). We have recently argued for “cripped” experiences of aging (Chivers, 2011, pp. 19-23; Changfoot & Rice, 2020), where “cripped” refers to the reclaiming of the noun “crippled” by disabled persons to express disability pride and ingenuity (by repurposing everyday technologies of the self, such as sneakers or boxer shorts, to create accessibility), as well as to what Kelly Fritsch (2012) retools into the verb “to crip,” meaning to actively desire disability community. In reclaiming disability as prideful and in “cripping” people’s experiences of being/becoming as they age with or into disability, we purposively disrupt the linear, progressive, modernist marking of time. Queer theorist Jack Halberstam (2005) refers to this as “straight time,” the ever forward directional,

getting better his-story of the white, middle-class, cis-gender non-disabled male. A theory of crip queer time, as we have recently written (Rice et al., 2017), offers:

a glimpse at the generative possibilities of replacing a fixed, linear understanding of a 'future perfect' with multiple, shifting, affective understandings of temporality that make space for, imagine and enact futures . . . that include the bodies/minds left out of normative renderings of personhood and futurity" (p. 217).

In this article, we crip and queer aging by surfacing new relationalities occurring in non-linear and multiple temporalities distinct from "successful" aging.

While presencing stories of aging with and into disability is central to crippling and queering aging futures, we also argue for the critical importance of centring Indigenous aging experiences not only to proliferate aging futures by and with Indigenous peoples, but also to bring visibility to Indigenous accounts according to the terms set by Indigenous video-makers themselves. We focus on Anishinaabe experiences specifically since we, as settler scholars living on Indigenous lands, write from the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg. The inclusion of Indigenous e/Elder voices and experiences in aging studies began in the late 2010s with Pace and Grenier (2017) suggesting that understandings of successful aging needed to be broadened through Indigenous community engagement in the development of new/old models more inclusive of Indigenous older peoples (n.p.). They also acknowledge the need for research on the role of Indigenous knowledge, cultural strengths, and resilience in Indigenous aging experiences.

Noting the still nascent interrogation of whiteness and colonial-normativity by settler scholars across mainstream aging scholarship writ large, settler scholar Chazan

(2019) works to “unsettle” heteropatriarchal lineage markers of “successful aging.” These inherently include the Canadian Crown’s colonial violence, which preempts Indigenous futures in gendered ways (National Inquiry into Missing and Murdered Indigenous Women and Girls, 2019). Through the stories of two Anishinaabe e/Elders, Chazan identifies how successful aging narratives can be unsettled to disrupt colonial/capitalist/heteropatriarchal notions of generativity. These narratives reach into future generations, working for “Indigenous futurities” (p. 16) while also connecting to the past. They are positive, meaningful, creative, and resilient in presenting futurities of intergenerational relations in resistance against colonial power and injustice (2019, p. 16). Building on Chazan, we follow the calls of Indigenous scholars such as Eve Tuck (Unangax) for “desire” over “damaged-based” research (2009), Eve Tuck and K. Wayne Yang for refusing to serve up and trade in stories of pain and humiliation to a colonial academy which “hungers” for them (2014), and Jarrett Martineau (êhiyaw-Plains Cree and Dene Suline) and Erik Ritskes for “reclaiming the terrain of decolonial struggle” (2014, p. I). We assert that critical theories of aging need to consider the perspectives, interests, strategies, and strengths of marginalized groups that may transform white, Eurocentric knowledges and along with these broader cultural representations and systemic responses.

Indigenous scholars provide a multiplicity of diverse narratives of Indigenous futures of aging. These include stories of relationalities among the living, the land, the spirit world, and those yet unborn (Anderson, 2011b; Grande, 2018; Tallbear, 2016). They foreground enduring resistance to ongoing colonial violence at structural, representational and interpersonal levels that seek forcibly to assimilate, debilitate, and

eliminate First Peoples (Boissoneau, 2016; Simpson, 2017), centering visionary modes for sustaining life into future generations. For Kim Anderson (Métis), narratives of aging resistance and futurity reveal rich and complex entwinements of past, present, and future; of community, relationships and culture; of land, fauna, and flora (2011b). For Sandy Grande (Quechua), aging stories reorient to “Indigenous elsewheres,” wherein aging is not viewed as a “crisis” so much as a synchronic expression of the ongoingness of the life of the world past any singular being (2018, p. 173). These narratives are also distinctly and uniquely *gendered*. If the heteropatriarchal drive for “conquest and consumption” (Anderson, 2011a) disappears Indigenous peoples, e/Elders, and culture from place and history, then this genocide implicates and affects Indigenous women, especially because conquest and consumption “are mapped out on the Indigenous female body” (Anderson 2011a, p. 168). For Anderson, stories from Anishinaabe Kwe (Anishinaabe women) e/Elders represent “story medicine” that holds healing qualities arising from embedded and embodied understandings of aging. These are inseparable from the land, from intergenerational relations, and from community, which together create and maintain Indigenous presence against colonial forces that seek to dispossess and disappear this presence. Grande notes that from “the relatively few studies of aging within Indigenous communities a pattern of belief emerges around aging as an integral moment in the cycles of life(s), not temporally ordered along a linear lifespan” (2018, p. 174). Indigenous women’s stories, attentive to their healing qualities and elsewhere timescapes, anticipate ways of aging well—detached from and in resistance to “successful aging.”

Since the 2010s, scholarship in discrete areas of Indigenous, crippling, and queering aging has emerged in disciplinary and interdisciplinary areas outside of and distinct from the “successful” aging literature. Indigenous, disability, and queer interventions do not desire to be *included* in explanatory or interventionist models for “successful” aging, but instead create new possibilities of aging futures premised on the needs, values, and interests, or terms set by Indigenous, disabled, and queer persons themselves. Our intention is to foreground some of those terms. We present multi-media stories made by diverse women who identify as older/e/Elder (between 55 and 89 years), Indigenous (specifically Anishinaabe) and non-Indigenous, queer, questioning and straight, not-yet-disabled and disability-identified. We argue that these stories bring into visibility Indigenous, crip and queer futurities of aging that open up non-linear experiences of time, intergenerational and intersectional relationalities, and human and non-human relations. Anishinaabe futurities of aging, especially, present embedded and embodied relationalities with land and kinship beyond heteronormative and patrilineal relations. Following a brief overview of method, we present and analyze six stories according to the following themes: Anishinaabe aging or the cycles of living and “digging up” medicine (Anderson, 2011b), crippled aging of welcoming dementia into lived experience; and aging queerly of living broken-ness and wholeness in conjunction. We hold stories of Indigenous aging, aging with and into dementia, and queer aging together and apart in this article, respecting the differences each of these representations of aging materialize, and their divergent futurities.

Method

To reimagine aging lives and build coalitions among Indigenous, disability, and queer studies and cultural gerontology, we adopted and developed a feminist, queer, crip, and decolonial methodology emerging from our workshops (see below). In line with Indigenous ontologies of relationality, and feminist and disability studies posthumanisms, we take an affirmative approach to bodymind difference. This approach places difference in its many forms at the heart of the inquiry, and creates space to envisage futures for bodyminds written out of our collective desired futures. Such a method offers one way to productively disrupt the logics of “successful aging” that reinforce heteronormative, cis-gender, white, colonial, and middle-class experiences as model experiences of aging. To this end, we have been working for nearly a decade developing arts-informed and especially story-based audio- and video-making research methods through the Re•Vision Centre for Art and Social Justice at the University of Guelph (Ontario, Canada). Re•Vision has a mandate to use arts-informed and community engaged research methods to foster social well-being, equity, and justice.³

One of the main research projects hosted out of Re•Vision is our *Bodies in Translation: Activist Art, Technology and Access to Life* (BIT) research project. BIT seeks to cultivate disability, d/Deaf, fat, Mad, and aging arts—what we call “non-

³ The main thematic areas of the Re•Vision Centre include: transforming professional care encounters; decolonizing educational institutions/relationships; and activating feminist disability creative practices.

normative art”—using a decolonizing and Indigenizing lens, through engaging with over 70 community and institutional partners and an ever-expanding network of collaborators. Drawing on activist arts and processual theoretical perspectives, Re•Vision adopts and adapts these methodologies and methods by creating workshops where people unpack and “talk back to” received representations, offering new meanings through making multimedia stories. These stories are produced in the form of one-to-five-minute-long videos that pair personal/community narratives with visuals such as video, artwork, photos, and more. We have worked with disability communities on healthcare access (Chaplick, Mykitiuk & Rice, 2015; Rice, LaMarre & Mykitiuk, 2018; Rice et al., 2017; Rice, LaMarre, Changfoot & Douglas, 2018; Viscardis et al., 2019); with urban Indigenous students, teachers, and parents on challenging colonial and neocolonial systems of formal schooling (Rice, Dion, Mündel, & Fowlie, 2020); with urban Inuit people on mobilizing Inuit cultural voice (Curley et al. in press); with disability and aging arts and activist movements (Aubrecht, et al., 2020; Changfoot & Rice, 2020); and with diverse queer women’s negotiations of body ideals and management practices (Rinaldi et al., 2016; Rinaldi et al., 2017; Rice et al., 2020). We continue to develop our method, attentive to intersectional (Rice, Harrison, & Friedman, 2019) and intrasectional knowledge (Rice, 2018; Changfoot & Rice, 2020) that surfaces in the workshop spaces. To date, we have generated close to 1000 stories, which have been screened widely, and disseminated across diverse academic and non-academic channels.

In spring 2019, we held an intensive 3-day workshop at Trent University,⁴ where diverse older women at self-identified intersections of aging, Indigeneity, disability, race, and queer lives created two-to-three-minute multimedia videos of their lived experience of aging using Re•Vision’s storytelling method. This involved an in-depth framing of the issues surrounding “successful” aging discourses, especially those that saturate the public sphere through commercial advertising. With the support of artists, videographers and facilitators in an open studio environment, storytellers brought intimate and affecting representations of their embodied and embedded experiences of aging into the world. This was done through a story circle where participants shared initial ideas around the experience or moment they would like to develop; writing exercises to help participants develop their scripts; tutorials on using audio, video, and editing software and equipment; and full technical, writing, and conceptual support for the workshop’s duration to help participants from script development to finished video. Participants were recruited through researcher networks in the Peterborough/Nogojwanong community and occupy diverse identities of aging. Some are practicing artists; all identify as aging and old(er). Our research ethics processes involved approvals of the research processes by the Trent University and University of Guelph Research Ethics Boards, speaking with participant storytellers prior to the workshop to introduce the project, and inviting them to participate through an informed consent process as per Canada’s Tri-

⁴ Trent University is located in the City of Peterborough, Ontario in Nogojwanong (meaning the place at the end of the rapids in Anishinaabemowin, the language of the Anishinaabeg), about 125km northeast of Toronto.

Council Policy Statement for the Ethical Conduct for Research Involving Humans
(Government of Canada, 2018).

To support an iterative idea of access, we envisaged elements of the experience to be as accessible as possible to those storytellers who signed up for the workshop. We created an access guide with information of what would happen on each day of the workshop, including directions and photos of the space as well as landmarks for wayfinding when approaching the space. As with all our workshops (Rice & Mündel, 2019), it was held in a barrier-free space and we followed our own practiced accessibility guidelines (Chandler et al., 2020). Before and during the workshops, we asked participants what would make the workshop accessible and comfortable for them. We consider what would make an ever-expanding understanding of accessibility through all our projects.

Since the workshop and Trent University are located on the traditional territory of the Michi Saagiig Nishnaabeg, governed by the Williams Treaties, we knew that it was important to partner with a Michi Saagiig Anishinaabe Elder (who was also one of the storytellers) to open the workshop with the land acknowledgement of the territory (Curve Lake, n.d.), a smudge (Trent University, 2019), and an Anishinaabe teaching. Following this, we helped to decolonize the space by working with an Anishinaabe caterer who provided nourishing food and a Potawatomi/Lenape artist to support the storytellers' creative efforts. We also acknowledged, both within the workshop and following it, that decolonizing is an ongoing, life-long project for settlers, and that it is a settler responsibility to undertake and carry forward this work. Researchers continue to build partnerships with Anishinaabe storytellers in generating knowledge from their stories,

mobilizing this knowledge, and making clear this partnership as co-presenters and co-authors, as we do in this article. Committed to the integrity of, and respect for, Indigenous Knowledge within the stories, settler researchers remain accountable to Anishinaabe storytellers in the mobilization of their stories. After the opening, we had a discussion of how an anti-oppressive and safer space can be created and held (Rice et al., 2015). Informed by research questions that talked back to “successful” aging discourses, each participant created a video that layered still and moving images, movement, ambient sound, and music with a script they prepared with the support of the story circle arising from their lived experience. To conclude the workshop, participants were invited to screen their stories, everyone received a copy of their video, and participants were given ample time to read through and give informed consent to how their stories would be mobilized for educational purposes. In-keeping with our practice of seeking consent for the meaning we collaboratively make of the stories, we invited the storytellers’ those work we feature here to come onto this article as co-authors.

We have selected six stories from this workshop based on the following criteria we develop below: the creators’ exploration of themes related to Anishinaabe aging, which bring into being Anishinaabe cyclical temporalities, relationalities and elsewhere; aging with and into disability, specifically dementia; and aging that overlaps with categories of identity, including gender and sexuality. We approach the stories as art rather than as data, thus we make no claims about their representativeness or generalizability. On this basis, we analyze chosen stories based on our reading of the artistic work they do in bringing something new into the world.

Anishinaabe Aging: Cycles of Living and Digging Up Medicine

Anishinaabe e/Elder stories from Peterborough/Nogojwanong center Indigenous knowledge of intergenerational and embodied connections and relationships, both human and non-human, from the past into the present and future. References to physical fitness, weddings, photos of grandparents and grandchildren through intergenerational nuclear family lineage, and representations of financial security do not appear in these stories. Instead of individuals, communities emerge. Instead of crisis, there is rich complexity of entanglements of relationships in intimate connection with the land and affective embodied experiences in synchronic and continuous temporalities, not linear time. Their stories show Anishinaabe ways of aging in and with community that have long been practiced.

The Two Row Wampum Belt from the Treaty between the Dutch and Five Nations of the Haudenosaune in 1613 is relevant to framing Settler - Indigenous relations in our analysis, here, as it is the earliest known Treaty between Europeans and Indigenous peoples of Turtle Island (now known as North America), and a decolonial (re)framing of the stories told by Anishinaabe e/Elders. This Treaty presents Indigenous and settler ways in parallel and illustrates some of the significant differences in worldviews between Indigenous nations and European colonizers, encoding Indigenous understandings of partnerships that emphasize living relationship over finite transaction/exchange. In our work to decolonize, we want to foreground Indigenous principles of ongoing reciprocity and relationship to animate the work of our grant. Indigenous people and settlers are each on their journeys as represented by two

parallel lines of purple wampum⁵ that do not overlap, symbolizing non-interference with one another. They travel in peace, friendship and respect represented by the three parallel lines of white wampum. The stories discussed below present in parallel Anishinaabe and settler experiences of aging. From the Anishinaabe stories, life in older age has a cyclical quality, through the incorporation of both younger and older experiences in relation with the land, and relations that expand beyond the heteronormative nuclear family form. The cyclical experience of life as continuous, and relational ontology of all things as entangled, are important for understanding how Anishinaabe storytellers understand themselves through lineage, land, and relational interdependencies among the human and non-human (i.e. animals, plants, earth, water) (Grande, 2018; Tallbear, 2016).



Figure 1: Image of the Two Row Wampum (Onondaga Nation, n.d.)

Description: The Two Row Wampum is made of wampum shells. There are two purple rows running in parallel left to right, with three white rows, one between the two purple rows and one above the upper purple row and one below the lower purple row.

⁵ Wampum is a traditional shell bead of the Eastern Woodlands First Nations. White shell beads are created from the North Atlantic whelk shell and white and purple beads are made from the quahog or Western North Atlantic hard-shelled clam. For more information on the Two Row Wampum, see Onondaga Nation, n.d.

In her story “Full Circle,” (<https://revisioncentre.ca/revisioning-aging>, password: revisioning) Angela Connors (Saugeen of the Bruce Peninsula)⁶, executive director of the Community Race Relations Committee of Peterborough, the key anti-racism organization in the city, opens with the memory of her son remarking, “there are no old people in our family,” which years later Connors realized spoke to the stolen lives of grandparents, aunties, and e/Elders. Refusing to describe her parents as survivors of the Indian Residential School system, Connors, in relating this traumatic legacy, makes clear that Indigenous life was not intended to be long-lived under Canada’s system of Indian Residential Schools or outside of it. The “Schools” were not institutions of education as understood by settlers, but, rather, carceral institutions that played a significant role in Indigenous dispossession, cultural genocide, and settler enrichment (Truth and Reconciliation Commission 2015). Her further experience of feeling and being out of synchronicity with markers of normative aging brings to light the misfitting she encountered. She describes losing her parents, acquiring her first bra, having children at a younger age, and coming full circle as she enters older adulthood, being seen as a younger person. The viewers of her story are brought into her past, the early deaths of her parents shaped by colonial violence, and her maturing life experiences bringing new meaning to this violence, loss and young motherhood.

In Connors’ story, a cyclical experience of time emerges. Returning to the past memory of her parents and their forced attendance at Indian Residential School brings

⁶ Each storyteller participant was invited to self-identify as they would like. We did not want to impose consistency because participants preferred that some self-identifying information remain private.

deeper meaning to her son's observation of there being no old people in the family. There is also refusal of the settler description of Indigenous people having survived beyond the Indian Residential School. In refusing that her parents were survivors, she enacts what Flowers (Leey'qsun, Coast Salish First Nation) refers to as an Indigenous refusal of the settler gaze (2015) and challenges settlers themselves to consider their/our implication in systems of colonial oppression. The anti-oppression and anti-racism work that Connors leads with the Community Race Relations is also part of the cycle of life: she now actively resists the oppression and racism experienced by her Anishinaabe community, as well as by Indigenous peoples, Black persons and people of colour where she lives.

In "A Gift from the Land," (<https://revisioncentre.ca/revisioning-aging>, password: revisioning) Alice Olsen Williams (Trout Lake, Curve Lake) describes in fine detail the process of the making of kaaskiiwag (thinly pared smoked moose meat) and her mishoomis iban's (late grandfather's) role of making nooka'igan (powdered moose meat). The rhythm of Williams' voice along with the process of making nooka'igan creates a heightened anticipation to dive into the deliciousness of this traditional Anishinaabe treat. Williams' video opens us up to understanding life as a cycle, instead of moving forward linearly and progressively; to intergenerational relationships based on reciprocity; and to a nurturance of life across ages and integral with the land. Life continues but never materializes in precisely the same way. For Grande (2018), care does not take place between separate entities. Instead, care occurs in a rich ecological weaving of community that is presented in Williams' video, across generations and also across living and spirit realms.

“I wanted more all the time,” Williams says in her story of the nooka’igan and the processes of its making. There is a desire for more of her mishoomis iban, the process of the kaaskiiwag and nookai’gan making, and the community that the process created. All is connected to the land and relationship with the land: the moose hunt, the process of making the kaaskiiwag by thinly paring moose meat to be draped and smoked over the fire, the pounding of the smoked moose meat into a fine powder, the nooka’igan, the gathering of the community into a circle, the passing of the nookai’gan with butter, all of which filled Alice with wanting “more all the time.”

This story of the kasskiiwag and nookai’gan is a story of community and how it is created through embodied relationships intimate with the land, the moose hunt, and the gathering of families as they watched elders process the moose meat. Williams describes her mishoomis iban who pounded the smoked moose meat into the powder as having a limp or maakimi. There is no word for disability in her Anishinaabe community. A person’s embodiment was and continues to be understood to change through time, and the community adjusted to people’s physical changes; there was a folding-in of these changes into the community. People did not view maakimi or having a limp as lesser than or not being useful. The community perceived everyone as contributing in useful ways. Williams’ mishoomis iban had the role of pounding the moose meat; his maakimi was part of him and part of his contributing.

Williams told the story of kasskiiwag and nookai’gan because she wanted to think of her grandfather, and this memory stood out for her. By reaching back into her childhood, Williams was herself “digging for medicine” (Anderson, 2011). Her story is medicine because of its teachings of the annual traditions of hunting and preparing

moose; acceptance of changes a person experiences as they grow old; ways people are folded into the community with a role that was providing, nourishing, and uplifting; and the inseparability between old age, the land, and community in the making of the delicious nookai'gan.

Crippled Aging: Welcoming Dementia into Lived Experience

Crippling and queering dementia renders temporalities and relationalities that welcome in dementia through sensitivity to the altered presence and interactions with persons living with dementia and in community. Sandberg and Marshall note (referencing Behuniak, 2011; Bülow & Holm, 2016; Peel, 2014) that persons living with dementia are positioned “as threatening, monstrous, and zombie-like existing somewhere between life and death” (2017, p. 5), frightening due to their misfitting from heteronormative futures (Garland-Thomson, 2011). Other dementia stereotypes and prejudices entail existential loss of self, disengagement, and incapacity (Katz, 2012; Milne, 2010; Zeilig, 2014). Additionally, the fear of dementia is scaled-up to loss of national identity when its increasing incidence in the population is projected from person to nation into the future (Aubrecht, et al., 2020; Aubrecht & Keefe, 2016). An ableist response to this threatening spectre is to eradicate dementia through prevention of cognitive decline, putting the onus on individuals to age successfully, thus also affecting disproportionately those economically and physically vulnerable (Hillman & Latimer, 2017).

Recently, more nuanced understandings of dementia have emerged. In film, dementia has been represented as a disordering and re-ordering of identities situated in

their social relations, demonstrating persons living with dementia as embodied, emotional, and social (Hillman & Latimer, 2017; Medina, 2018). Theatre has challenged negative dementia stereotypes and stigma. The research-based dramatic performance *Cracked: New light on dementia*, follows two families experiencing stigma associated with dementia, and dramatizes their struggles and accomplishments with community and long-term care services (Kontos, et al., 2018). The play raised awareness of the importance of bringing relationships associated with dementia into visibility. Anne Basting's "Creative Community of Care" projects such as *The Penelope Project*, which engaged residents, both living with and not living with dementia, their families, staff, and administrators of a continuing care retirement community, made dementia normal such that dementia was not perceived as a barrier to creating beauty and meaning (2018, p. 749).

Storytelling by family carers of those with dementia also offers more nuanced representation of persons with dementia and the relationalities that arise when welcoming dementia into lived experience. Instead of the absence of life and dementia's fear-inducing aspects, agency along different registers and temporalities emerge for two storytellers in relationship with persons living with dementia: the first in relation to a parent and the second in relation to a spouse.

In "Time Travel," (<https://revisioncentre.ca/revisioning-aging>, password: revisioning) Nadine Changfoot (settler, Cantonese & Hakka) reflects upon a moment shared with her father, Jack, who lived with dementia in his long-term care residence. Changfoot captures a moment in which she lets go of how she previously related to her dad and accepts him as a person aging with and into dementia. She vividly recalls him

standing at a junction of the residence lobby close to the elevators and, standing there, said “good-bye.” Jack initiated the farewell, saying, “I’ve got to go now,” as one of their visits came to an end. Changfoot distinctly remembers feeling that she was being given permission to go, and not wanting to be let go. In that moment, their futures felt unknown; yet, the past very much shaped and entered her experience of that moment because she had heard her dad repeat the phrase, “I’ve got to go now,” as he would depart for work when she was a young girl. From this interaction, she discerned a cyclical or synchronic sense of time that connected past with the present, where they were younger and also older, and a temporality in which she felt resistance and acceptance. Jack no longer fit in the normative diachronic temporalities of society, but through relationship with his daughter and visits over time, they found a different and shared temporality where linearity gave way to multiple timescapes in which past, present, and future could cohere simultaneously.

In “Transitions,” (<https://revisioncentre.ca/revisioning-aging>, password: revisioning) Ann Barrett (settler, English) shares her relationship with her spouse, now living with a neurological disease. Their relationship shifts as Barrett becomes a caregiver, keeping meticulous records of her husband’s changing bodymind. Barrett experiences loss in her relationship with her spouse, such as no longer sharing social justice commitments, which were a source of strong connection between them. Yet, she also experiences new nurturing relationships that orient her in “a new direction”: relationships with family, friends, personal service workers, and healthcare providers, especially those with experiences similar to her own. In Barrett’s film, we might interpret the timescape as “bent” or queered in that it is expressed cyclically when she shares

that she is “experiencing again the power of love, compassion, gratitude and laughter” that was part of her younger life, and which helps her now in the present. She is discovering and building an accessible and supportive community, one that is “dementia welcoming.” Relationships of support become important spaces for welcoming dementia in for family and carers.

These stories suggest that when we welcome dementia into lived experience by orienting and attuning to others’ altered subjectivities, we open possibilities for crippling and queering our relationalities and temporalities.

Queer Aging: Living Loss and Wholeness

In reaching into disability studies and queer studies, we encounter different perspectives on and representations of the “life course” that contrast sharply with those offered by “successful aging” biopedagogies. When queer persons have space and opportunity to share their experiences of and perspectives on aging, and the conditions and contexts that influence their aging processes, trajectories that differ from those of cisgender, heteronormative nuclear family narratives become visible. Reczek (2018) notes how alternative trajectories of aging for LGBTQ individuals tend to include greater diversity of romantic partnerships and friendship groups, as well as more engaged caregiving, care strategies, and end-of-life planning for parents and partners, compared to heterosexual and cisgender communities. The timescapes that move the narratives in these stories are suggestive of a unique punctuation of time, not in line with heteronormative or “straight” time that is linear and progressive, but rather with queer, crip and other non-normative lifeways that are in line with shifting relationships, multiple

loved ones, and expansive networks of kin relations beyond heteronormative nuclear family forms.

In “Heart, broken,” (<https://revisioncentre.ca/revisioning-aging>, password: revisioning) Mary Gordon (settler, born in Mushkegowuk Cree territory, Northern Ontario, of Irish, Scots, and British immigrant stock) opens with the reflection, “I think, I think I’m aging into beauty,” as she caresses ‘Winnie,’ a papier-maché sculpture that exudes pride in deep wrinkles, a toothy grin with spaces in-between and perky-nippled naked sagging breasts, whilst proudly describing herself as the “short, fat, queer, old doll I am.” The light-heartedness of her opening, and affirmation of her queer prideful aging self, gives way to a sober mood as she shares the grief of the devastating loss of her grandson, foreshadowed by their “up and down” road-trip east, the opposite of the ‘Go West, young man’ progress narrative that dominates Western film. In an unflinching tone, she recounts that she was told by grief counsellors to say “he completed suicide.” Gordon next brings her viewer into her broken heart, introducing us to the Japanese medical diagnosis, Takotsubo, also known as broken-heart syndrome, which is thought to be experienced mainly by women. As she describes the syndrome, she focuses on the left ventricle of a heart, the defining feature of Takotsubo (being similar in shape to an octopus trap, or takotsubo), which becomes enlarged in response to sudden overwhelming stress. The tone of the video shifts once again as Gordon turns to describe Kintsugi, the Japanese art of mending broken pots, with its aestheticization of the beauty of broken objects mended back together. In Gordon’s storytelling, Kintsugi becomes a metaphor for “unique cracks that leave different marks on each of us,” which

signify “the essence of resilience.” The cracks appear suddenly but the mending is a slower, more enduring process.

In contrast to the linear heteronormative pathway associated with “successful aging,” Gordon brings our attention to the marks and breaks within and on each of us, the broken parts of ourselves that might show and that might not show, particularly the marks of unimaginable loss. Gordon shares what mended her broken heart: love and care for her grandchildren and family relations. Her queer pride in her joyous closing, “I am beautiful,” embodies the fullness and wholeness the story of her queer life and memory of her grandson offers, which importantly includes her loss and broken heart. Yet, from this loss, the mending and creation of queer life creates aging into beauty on Gordon’s terms. Holding the papier-maché ‘Winnie’ (named after Gordon’s late mother) with joy in her video, she channels her mother and her grandson; they are always close with her. Deeply felt grief and loss, the continued presence of loved ones beyond their physical form, the temporality of mending which has no definitive end, and queer and aging pride are the many facets of aging, queered for how they expand understanding of aging to be capacious.

In “HAG Hair,” (<https://revisioncentre.ca/revisioning-aging>, password: revisioning) Gisele Lalonde (settler, queer, French Canadian) brings together two experiences of aging, her late mother’s aging, and her own aging symbolized by what she pridefully reclaims as her “hag hair.” Punctuated by the repetitive ding of an elevator arrival, her story opens with the joy of having “groovy, short, dark, hair,” which her friends and partner openly appreciated and loved. After her mom moved into her new apartment, Lalonde recounts how her mom would meet her at the elevator “all dressed up and

ready to go” to descend enthusiastically into a dollar store or a pub. To mark a shift in time, Lalonde shows the camera a full view of her now luscious, long grey hair which also visually signals a shift with her mother who began to meet Lalonde at the elevator in her pyjamas. They would stay in, sharing homemade soup, a drink, and favourite TV program. Her mom would easily share one of her many memorable stories. Lalonde clearly loves her late mother and her own ‘hag hair.’ ‘Hag hair’ expresses her emotions and transformation into a new form of her beauty, yet she also shares the sadness of her mother’s changing self. Continuing to relate with her late mother, Lalonde shares that claiming the hag has been freeing. She is a superhero with her cape of beautiful grey hair.

Lalonde’s experience of aging occurs in parallel with her late mother’s, showing that there are multiple and intertwined timescapes of aging for persons in relationship. In her story, Lalonde marks her own aging from dark short hair to longer grey hair alongside the aging of her late mother who would at one time be dressed “to the nines” and ready for fun, but eventually became comfortable to stay in and cosset in pyjamas. As Lalonde embraces her ‘hag hair,’ her mother declines in health. By sharing these stories of herself and her mother, Lalonde shows that there is no singular experience or trajectory of aging because aging occurs in interrelationship with people. This interrelationship reveals a cyclical dynamic, one that includes grief as decline occurs, and also joy as Lalonde celebrates her lustrous long grey hair, assigning it superpower capacities as it protects her from the ageism she experiences.

The uneasy meshing of grief with joy and sorrow with pleasure propel these films’ distinctive angles on the intricate aesthetics of aging. Exploring and exploding these

tensions, Gordon and Lalonde's videos provide examples of crip queer futurities: crip and queer for the way aging with and into disability disrupts heteronormative, ableist futures and binaries, bringing into view cyclical or non-linear temporalities where multifaceted aspects of relationship, unique to each storyteller, become centred and embodied.

Discussion

The stories presented offer multiplicitous resistant accounts that exist outside the dominant narratives of "successful aging" by breathing new life into storied aging experiences, including those of Anishinaabe aging, aging with and into dementia, and aging queerly. They challenge the cultural trope of heterosexual futures secured biopedagogically through images of robust active aging and photographs of children, themselves heteronormatively represented as 'reproducers' of further heteronormative futures. Instead of presenting themselves primarily or solely in relationship with life partners, these storytellers situate themselves amidst multiple relationships, inhabiting diverse landscapes outside the nuclear family form.

In the Anishinaabe stories by Connors and Williams, time emerges as a continuous, cyclical flow. For Connors, experiences of puberty and becoming a mother at a young age made her older before she was older, and now she is seen as younger while older in age. In Williams' story, the cycle of life comes through in the process of making nookai'gan (powdered moose meat) associated with the annual moose hunt, and her mishoomis iban (late grandfather) living with maakimi (a limp) as a central figure in the preparation that brought community together. The intergenerational and land relations come through the stories as integral to Anishinaabe identity and

knowledge. There is pride in the entwinement of Anishinaabe knowledge and aging where aging is not a grim downhill slide nor focused on the nuclear family, health, or wealth according to settler “successful” aging. The stories do not create normative frames of aging. Instead, they bring viewers into the importance of the past, enmeshed as these historically remembered pasts are within the frames of the stories, as well as into futures whose possibilities are at once unknown, yet resistant. They resist dominant settler narratives of old age with and into disability, while they affirm and assert composite wholes and temporalities of intergenerationality, land, and community.

The stories about aging loved ones neither celebrate “cure” nor “overcoming” of illness nor tap into and reproduce the desire for a just-around-the-corner solution fuelled by our biomedical curative imaginaries (Kafer, 2013). Loved ones are neither monstrous nor zombie-like though they have changed and become an altered presence in the storytellers’ lives. In each relationship, the person living with dementia retains personhood that they express through their everyday interactions and their embodied being. Changfoot’s father had to be absent during her childhood, but now asserts his choice about when to leave even though this decision is constrained by the boundary between long-term care and the world outside of it. Barrett’s spouse had been a partner in the social justice work they undertook together, and now no longer expresses this passion that was shared so deeply. While there is no means to continue these shared interests, Barrett’s spouse still retains personhood in her story; the photo of her spouse walking with his daughter presents him as his own person, not filled in by Barrett herself. In each of their stories, Changfoot and Barrett are careful not to author the futures of their loved ones as foregone conclusions, or as their own. Changfoot offers

up a blurred landscape, one that is open to the unknown and emergent. In Barrett's account, a photo of herself appears at the end; she stands alone in soft focus, with a large body of water and open horizon in the background, after having expressed the relationships that give her a sense of fullness.

Gordon and Lalonde's stories situate grief as fundamental to their aesthetic re-becoming, thereby reorienting "curative time" by showing multiple pathways betwixt mourning and celebration (Kafer, 2013). Each tells a story of a loved one dying, one slowly and one suddenly; one anticipated, one not. Each death lines up with a shift in the storyteller who simultaneously must and won't relinquish a past. Backed by the heartbeat of a drum, Gordon relates her broken heart to an aesthetic tradition that revels in making the cracks show, reminiscent of Mitchell and Snyder's call to draw attention to the uneasy fit of prosthesis (2001, p. 8). Her expected trajectory into the fearlessness of grandparenthood is tragically undone, mended by the tangents made possible amid despair. Lalonde mourns her mother and yet finds joy and laughter by embracing freedom from societal expectations of grooming, relinquishing what she found difficult to witness in her mother's slow decline. Like Gordon's "Kintsugi," Lalonde's hair exteriorizes her inner state of being, tells the story of her day, her mood, and her grief. Neither story resists nor rejects grief but rather integrates it into a celebratory mode that exists in tandem with the unresolvable stories that haunt the storytellers as they age. In resisting but not rejecting heteronormative cultural scripts, the stories collectively embrace what Mary Russo calls "the scandal of anachronism," taking risks that, as Russo puts it, are "both necessary and inevitable as a *sign of life*" (emphasis ours, Russo 1999, p. 21).

The bending of time occurs in all the stories described here, each in their own way. As critical feminist and post-colonial scholars tell us (Shildrick, 2015; McClintock, 2013), cyclical movements of bodies and of time are often devalued and disdained: shitting, pissing, and bleeding are all abject bodily movements, whereas movements enabling bodies to become faster, better, more efficient and productive are highly valued. A similar logic underpins our culturally preferred diachronic way of measuring time. Under modernism, groups of people who embrace forward marching time are coded as productive, progressive, and civilized, while those who live by cyclical time, oriented around the reproduction of lives and worlds are coded as regressive, non-productive, or merely sustaining themselves, and thus are seen as uncivilized. Yet cyclical movements of time within the stories bring attention to the depth and richness of settler and Anishinaabe storytellers' relationships, and their open and divergent futurities. They also surface the richness of synchronic time, open to the past and future, whilst signifying constant (though non-progressive) change in how living continues while the life that materializes is never precisely the same.

Conclusion

Anishinaabe, Crip, and Queer Futurities of Aging: Together, Alongside

The stories presented disrupt the persistence of hetero-happy futures noted by Sandberg and Marshall (2017) that dominate the cultural landscape and the logics that organize whether individuals are deemed as successful/failing, desirable/undesirable, worthy/unworthy in their aging selves. Hetero-happy futures and the binaries that underwrite them become Indigenized, crippled and queered when new meanings of

being and becoming old attuned to the intersections of Anishinaabe, disability and queer life are brought into view. Anishinaabe ways of aging refuse settler “successful” aging through cyclical temporalities and embedded and embodied relationalities with humans, spirit, animals, and plants. The Anishinaabe and settler stories, while sharing resonances in their disruption of normative linear time and nuclear family relations, should be maintained as co-existing, separate entities, taking guidance from The Two Row Wampum. Anishinaabe stories comprise relations that are deeply connected with land, ancestors, and spirit, in resistance to colonial forces; settler stories centre embodied selves and relationships in settler contexts shaped by colonial economic forces. There is much to learn from both: holding and supporting them in parallel. Anishinaabe e/Elders have invited Re•Vision to hold a future storytelling workshop within their community so that more e/Elder stories can be created for knowledge keeping and holding of traditions and culture. The Anishinaabekwe stories presented, here, also provide longstanding ways of aging for settler audiences to consider, ways distinct from and in resistance to “successful aging.” For settler older persons, further story creation will surface ongoing new possibilities of crip and queer futurities.

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