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[...]: Resurrecting Dead Data

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[...]

Resurrecting Dead Data

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Abstract

As data analysts in interpretive qualitative projects, we curate. At its simplest, curating identifies the most salient, transformative moments within participant narratives to share from data observation and data listening. It is the act of interpreting some reality into being through the narrative that one presents. What then, becomes of the data that are not curated as part of the narrative...the data that remain? In this article, we work within and against interpretivism (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to explore the refuse (trash) of a project examining the lives of out, queer men on a rural university campus in the Deep South.

Prelude

As data analysts in interpretive qualitative projects, we curate. At its simplest, curating identifies the most salient, transformative moments within participant narratives to share from data observation and data listening. It is the act of interpreting some reality into being through the narrative that one presents. What then, becomes of the data that are not curated as part of the narrative...the data that remain? In this paper, we work within and against interpretivism (Jackson & Mazzei, 2012) to explore the refuse (trash) of a project examining the lives of out, queer men on a

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rural university campus in the Deep South. Our purpose is two-fold: first, we take up St. Pierre's (2017) use of the Deleuzian concept of *haecceity* to explore the data that remain:

First, a haecceity is not defined by linear, chronological time but by "floating times" (Deleuze & Parnet, 1997/2007, p. 92). It "can last as long as, and even longer than, the time required for the development of a form and the evolution of a subject" (p. 92). Second, haecceities are events, singularities always becoming in relations of speed and slowness, so they have no essence that forms and stabilizes them into a substance that can be subsumed under another concept or category. They "are bits of experience that can't be fit into a nice narrative unity" (Rajchman, 2001, p. 85) that begins with "I." (pp. 688-689)

We draw, as an example, the event of checking demographic boxes regarding "gender" and "sexual orientation" on a campus climate survey, in which one produces a static representation of self (in the act of checking a box) that does not reflect who one was or will be. We use this tool to explore how checking a box fabricates a stability of subject across time and space, instantiating as fixed what is a momentary fictitious interpretation (St. Pierre, 2017), and simultaneously produces queerness. Thus, what aspects of lived experiences, even those in the future, are trashed in the process, and what become?

Next, we zoom out to reflect on the axiological in the refuse/refusal that is produced through curating. We ask: If the opposite of what's valued becomes the "dead" (unused, buried, forgotten) data, what does that juxtaposition reveal about from where/when/what we are (be)coming and our axiological orientation? We describe the ways in which a dataset is never left; the researcher always returns to it, even subconsciously in subsequent interpretations of "new" data. Oscillating positions change what is valued within the data, which underscores the unstable nature of a subject and a project. A researcher could, for example, devote an entire career to working with one dataset—a ceaseless project. In this unstable project, what values are placed on the style of reporting? The refuse or the remains of data may no longer have a narrative style or complete a narrative trajectory. They may illuminate singular interpretations; they may resist hinging with the experiences of the researcher(s) or other subjects. They will inevitably resist categorization, which dooms them to un-reliability. What presentation, then, do trashed data take if they are no longer part of a "tale," or onto-epistemological trajectory? Here, we find value in writing as a form of inquiry (Richardson & St. Pierre, 2005). That is, if piles of data trash cannot easily be interpreted, narrativized, and themed, one must find alternative ways of distributing and disseminating. Those alternatives often come into being by consistent resurrection of "dead" data, placing "dead" data in the hands of new curators, and developing new modes of reporting that fit the "dead" data, rather than making the "dead" data fit extant modes of reporting.

The process of resurrecting data is easy. The means by which to vitalize that data are hard.

The Living

[...] are developed from the data heap left by Benjamin's dissertation (and forthcoming monograph): *Pink Lemonade: An Autoethnographic Fantasia on Queer Campus Themes* (Arnberg, 2020). Benjamin produced autoethnographic accounts of 10 gay men's lives on a Deep South college campus. Benjamin studied with these men from 2016-2019, and his engagement with the campus climate extends back to 2005. These accounts are generated through Langer's (2016) model of research vignettes. Central to autoethnographic vignettes is "hinging," in which the autoethnographer captures overlap between the experiences of the autoethnographer and the researched (Jones & Adams, 2010); hinging, in this vein, becomes a validation technique, "we create *good stories*: stories that report on recognizable experiences, that translate simply and specifically to an 'actionable result'" (p. 211); a hinge is a hybrid of triangulation and member checking, more than one member of the population shared an experience and interpretation (Creswell & Miller, 2000; Tracy, 2010). Benjamin produced impressionistic vignettes, through assemblage of myriad data, based on his shared experiences/interpretations with his participants; these vignettes include riffs on depression, fashion, discrimination, leadership, addiction, and gay sex shame. He incorporated notes on sound, dress, and movement in addition to spoken word. As illuminating as these hinges/vignettes may be, they risk ignoring the moments of participant experience that do not yield easily to hinges. On an even more fundamental level, Benjamin's positionality as a white, cisgendered gay man means intersectional blind spots were/are inevitable, especially since his sampling stemmed from network and snowball sampling on a campus whose racial makeup includes an 87% white, middle-class population. As Eng (2010) notes in queer liberal projects, race appears through disappearing; Eng notes, in an analysis of the false analogies made of *Loving v. Virginia* and *Lawrence v. Texas*, race is only under heightened scrutiny in its "overt manifestations" (p. 41). In our work on "dead" data, in reference to *Pink Lemonade*, the dead may include the "twice dead," racially informed queer experiences that never made it into the data set at all. Or even gender or class differentiated data may become "twice dead" if those gendered and classed experiences radically differ from Benjamin's ability to see them. Though Benjamin observed and interviewed two men who self-identified as Queer Men of Color, what aspects of their lives were left non-curated because Benjamin's whiteness rendered them invisible (dead)?

Another critical blind spot within the hinge method are Benjamin's accounts of suicide; Benjamin (as are all researchers) is inevitably unable to provide hinges of narratives when the narratives of suicide victims are permanently silenced by death. If data do not yield easily to hinges, they may also not yield to narrative conventions (like plot, repetition, or brute-ness). The data may not have even "existed," in a tangible sense (Daza & Gershon, 2015; MacLure, 2010; St. Pierre, 2013), and may have escaped Benjamin's attention altogether. Benjamin's rendering of suicide,

sex shame, drag exuberance, and accompanying queer experiences were largely informed by non-ocular data. Music. Speech pitch, volume, rhythm. Movement. Dress. Mannerism. Visual details of the environment. Silence. Only Benjamin could share the multi-sensory experience of interviewing Teddy and Adolfo in a bar before and after they performed drag. The brute data remain; the other data (the music, the ambient bar noise, the flashing lights, the rumbling of the floor) are dead. Even the bodies, as they were, are dead. Teddy, Adolfo, and Benjamin are older. The bar goers are dispersed. The weather is changed. Dead. Dead. Dead. So how does one reanimate brute data to the extent and to the viscerally powerful capacity they had at the moment they were captured? Does reanimation to that extent even matter?

Reanimation, to a certain extent, does matter, since social justice scholarship (to which this project aspires) demands rendering clear the environments that uplift and/or diminish marginalized people so that we can provoke environmental change. The challenge for the researcher (and writer) is to generate viscerally powerful reanimations that possess the aura of authenticity so that change-makers are moved to act in a socially-just manner. That challenge is amplified when data and contexts bear the dust of age or are perceived to be overexposed; i.e. one dreads being seen as “been there, done that.” One also dreads leaving readers cold. The paradox extant within the reanimation project is that researchers may be meticulous in re-curating lives, experiences, phenomena, and events as viscerally and authentically possible, but still fail to approach “authenticity,” since authenticity was already a flash, witnessed by the few bodily presented, all of whom witnessed a slightly different flash of authenticity. Researchers must also attempt viscerally powerful reanimation through the two-dimensional surface of the paper on which their reanimation is printed. Ideally, researchers would send their readers into the contexts they studied (study); but that ideal is impossible, since none of us can revisit the exact same circumstances once studied (witnessed), nor encounter the exact same person once met and observed.

Though the odds are multiply stacked against the reanimation project (and re-curation), the exigency of the project cannot be overstated. It provokes researcher reflexivity not always demanded by other qualitative projects (since it requires the researcher to revisit their data, their prior curation(s), their prior motives for curating, and their internal shifts in onto-epistemological perspectives developed since the conclusion of said prior curation(s)), and it insists upon viewing researched subjects as constantly developing human beings with ongoing (and increasing) value, not as boxes to be checked off and discarded.

The Dead

Our work broadens the scope of what data are and the means by which said data may exist for onto-epistemological consumption. Our work broadens an understanding of what is made possible through alternative reporting strategies,

particularly those that render visible disparate data that were/are “trash.” In this vein, we recast what the research project is; it is infinite and perpetual: Never “true” and never “complete.”

The dead, in this study, are data that were “trashed” in the original project, *Pink Lemonade*, and its accompanying conference presentations. The process of resurrection was performed exclusively by Hannah and Carey; Benjamin (I) provided my data transcripts to Hannah and Carey; however, I redacted excerpts that were previously included in *Pink Lemonade* and/or conference presentations. Hannah and Carey could only see the “trash” from those projects. In addition, Hannah and Carey had copies of my audit trail and reflection journals written during the data generation phase. All this on top of the finished projects themselves, which they supervised. Carey and Hannah were my dissertation co-chairs, and Hannah was the original faculty sponsor of my IRB protocol for *Pink Lemonade* (we submitted the first IRB in 2016 and have renewed it through 2020). Hannah and Carey read and curated excerpts from these data sources. They submitted their curated pieces separately to me; each submission included their reflections and annotations documenting why they chose their excerpted narratives and the value they think these narratives have above and beyond the original projects from which those narratives were excluded. Their submissions and reflections are entered, verbatim, in subsequent sections labeled “The Dead.” Following each “Dead” section, I include a section called “The Living” wherein I explain how the selected men were initially represented in previous work. The comparison between “The Dead” and “The Living” exhibits our argument that: (1) data never really die, because (2) data are not static entities able to conjure only one interpretation or conclusion, and that (3) data possess a multiplicity of interpretive possibilities that benefit from exposure to myriad points-of-view. The last point returns us to St. Pierre’s work on haecceity; data exist in “floating times” and resist neat assimilation into narrative unity. A curating approach acknowledges the “floating time” surrounding data. In practice, curating presents (rather than represents), and resurrection enables data to float to other temporalities, to connect to/with new contexts, and to speak on behalf of different possibilities from those under which it/they originated.

The Liminal

Our work centers on queer subjects. Our methods stem from unions between queer theory and postqualitative onto-epistemology. Benjamin resists identifying conventional qualitative paradigms (interpretivism, constructivism, etc.), since he believes that queer onto-epistemology is its own paradigm; indeed, in his solo work, he calls it the primordial paradigm. Our resurrection cannot commence without first establishing the onto-epistemological commitments made under a queer (primordial) paradigm, especially in contrast to Eng’s rendering of “queer liberalism” and its hetero- and homo-normativity:

A product of late capitalist rationalization, queer liberalism functions as a supplement to capital, but in a desexualized, repackaged, and contained form. In other words, we might say that neoliberalism enunciates (homo)sexual difference in the register of culture—a culture that is freely exchanged (purchased) and celebrated (consumed). Thus, from the legal perspective of *Lawrence*, we might say that as sodomy is transformed into intimacy—coming together with the logic of queer domesticity as an aestheticized ideal—homosexual particularity and difference are absorbed into a universalized heteronormative model of the liberal human, an abstract national culture and community. In the process, a political movement of resistance and redistribution has been reconfigured and transformed into an interest group and niche market—a commercial scene of entertainment venues, restaurants, and shopping—in which gays and lesbians are liberated precisely by proving that they can be proper U.S. citizen-subjects of the capitalist nation-state. In this regard, family is not just whom you choose but on whom you choose to spend your money. (p. 30)

Eng's work helps bring a queer lens to methodological convention. Queer subjects are en vogue in contemporary educational scholarship; indeed, they are a cause célèbre in many publications and conferences (*Qualitative Inquiry* devoted an issue to the Pulse shooting; numerous queer studies journals sprung up over the last three decades, including interdisciplinary, i.e. *GLQ* and *Journal of Homosexuality*, and discipline-specific journals, i.e. *Journal of LGBT Youth* and *Journal of Gay and Lesbian Mental Health*; queer inclusion is making its way into many educational mission statements; and queer special interest groups and symposia are enshrined in major social science conferences). However worthwhile these achievements are, many have come at the expense of normalizing specific brands of queerness. These brands are almost exclusively rooted in whiteness, economic elitism, binary gendered thinking, and heteronormalized kinship practices (Cohen, 1997; Eng, 2010; Esteban-Munoz, 2003; Ferguson, 2003; Halberstam, 2011; Nyong'o, 2019; Warren, 2017). Methodological brands and traditions additionally privileged epistemological conventions that have historically centered whiteness and cisgenderedness as the norm against which to place all other subjects of study. These conventions most quickly and efficiently recognize and report privilege, and reward researchers who practice said conventions without complaint.

We complain.

In our discipline, education, these conventions often follow what Freire (2018) identifies as a “banking” model of teaching (and, more broadly, administering). Benjamin extends the metaphor: Researchers are wealth managers who extract and invest data for particular political, economic, and onto-epistemological purposes. Often, even without intention, benevolent research wealth managers perpetuate queer marginalization through methodological practices that replicate the normalizing impulses of heteropatriarchy. Examples of this practice exist in methods *and* in research aims. In education, research on queer subjects aims to correct: queer suicide, queer substance abuse, queer susceptibility to violence, queer gender

transformation (still labeled “dysphoria”), and queer sex subcultures. The aims frame queers as the subjects in need of fixing rather than: fix heteropatriarchy. Interventions are developed to mitigate symptoms (i.e. queer suicide) without ever engaging the root causes; research wealth managers position themselves as advisers on how to assimilate into a heteropatriarchal world. Methods used to develop these interventions mimic a normative impulse; replication and validation are king (even though queer experience is not monolithic), and decisions are rarely made unless “big data” enter the conversation (to date, only one “big data” study has been done on queer subjects in a collegiate context: *2010 State of Higher Education for Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender People*). Data (and subjects) are forced to fit a handful of methodological conventions, such as triangulation and/or saturation, neither of which are of much use on rural campuses where some queer experiences exist in isolation. For example, Benjamin’s robust network of queer students and staff does not include any trans women or men of color. If he interviewed someone who fit that demographic bill, would he be able to triangulate? Would his report be taken seriously without triangulation?

Like queers assimilating into heteropatriarchy under the paternalism of research wealth managers, data assimilate. Shouldn’t the equation be flipped? Shouldn’t the method adapt to the data? Our work counters the contemporary advent of constructivism and post-humanism in qualitative inquiry, adding queer theory and postqualitative approaches to the discussion. We defend and expand upon what Nordstrom (2018) calls “antimethodology;” our defense stems from resistance to the condition that epistemological capital comes through prolonged engagement in the field, thick description, member-checking, and multiple rounds of coding. Nordstrom draws attention to the absurdity inherent in these methods; one makes a truth claim while simultaneously undermining the claim’s truth, since methodological buttressing serves only to underline the instability of a “truth,” which could/can only be said to exist when research tradition says it exists. Antimethodology resists making truth claims, which is especially resonant with/for queer students about whom much untruth pervades the cultural imagination. The impulse to locate, examine, and present “truth” becomes problematic for queer students who live their lives outside truth. In heteronormative, binary thinking, queers are: Not normal. Not natural. Not visible. Not whole. Not safe. Not sane. Deleuze (1990) helps us define queers in conversations with absurdity, since absurdity is “that which is without signification or that which may be neither true nor false” (p. 15). Queer subjects are defined only in opposition to the dominant, they are not definitions in themselves, and thus cannot exist as “queer” unless a “non-queer” simultaneously exists. And yet, there is no such thing, in epistemological terms, as “non-queer,” since compulsory heterosexuality is a fantasy without root in biological fact. Yet there are marginalized subjects whose marginalization is rooted in “sexual/gender deviance” and documented as deviant by normalizing paradigms of social science research. Queers are simultaneously the most normal and the most abnormal. We

need methodologies that more adequately account for this absurdity. Ahmed (2013) notes that queer life is invisible to the heteropatriarchy, yet heteropatriarchy inflicts bodily harm on queer bodies (Rankin, Weber, Blumenfeld, & Frazer, 2010; Woodford, Chonody, Kulick, Brennan, & Renn, 2015). Queer lives are treated as neither true nor false; Halberstam (2011) writes that queer lives are situated as failures of heteronormative assimilation. Queer experiences are invalidated as non-reliable or non-definable; thus, an analysis of their “being” must start with an analysis of the absurd. And tracking the absurd (and its philosophical connection to risk and death, as well as futurity and fabulation) is a leap into onto-epistemological limbo and risk (Esteban-Munoz, 2003; Nyong’o, 2019). That risk highlights the “risky queer,” which resonates in the cultural imagination as a subject who is perpetually at risk of sexual violence, suicide, homelessness, poverty, discrimination, and substance abuse (Assari, 2018; Dagirmankian, McDaniel, & Shadick, 2017; Ebersole, Moorer, Noble, & Madson, 2015; Graham, Jensen, Givens, Bowen, & Rizo, 2019; Heiden-Rootes, Wiegand, Thomas, Moore, & Ross, 2018; Hirsch, Cohn, Rowe, & Rimmer, 2017; Johnson, Matthews, & Napper, 2016; Murchison, Boyd, & Pachankis, 2017; Puckett, et al., 2016; Schmitz, & Tyler, 2018; Shelton, 2016). Our approach (which is queer, postqualitative, absurd, and temporally complex) does not seek discrete truths, but rather seeks “ontological entanglements... understood to be one among many possible entanglements” (Coole & Frost, 2010) to, as Rosiek and Snyder (2018) write, “sensitize people to the experiences of others” and allow scholars to imagine “futures of being” that differ from present being. Our focus on “dead” data is essential to adequately producing ontological entanglements, since resurrecting dead data: (1) highlights additional possible entanglements, (2) further exposes marginalized experience to others, (3) underlines the nature of researcher positional evolution, (4) recalibrates curated research from new, expanded perspectives, and (5) allows new positionalities and lenses into the conversation for expanded views of the resurrected, living data.

The Living and The Dead

When producing autoethnographic vignettes, the participant narrative curated is, most likely, selected because the researcher saw within that kernel something that resonated within themselves (themselves is intentionally used to be gender-neutral). In my (Benjamin’s) case, vignettes derived from mutual interest in fashion, mutual experiences of suicidal ideation (although I, unlike those studied, never killed myself), mutual experiences of workplace discrimination (in the same administrative context), and mutual experiences of internalized homophobia. From a purely quantitative angle, my vignettes curated less than twenty-five percent of the available data within my data set. Thus, much of the project legitimized certain experiences specifically because those experiences replicated or expanded my narrative, as my narrative had formed to that point. These experiences are what will “float in time”

in perpetuity as the official record of the experiences of gay men, in that context, in that era, despite not being the whole record nor my filter being the best/only filter through which to view said data.

Subsequent to *Pink Lemonade*, I shifted my focus to men who have engaged in “risky” behaviors (still within the institutional context). I shifted due to a “risky” sexual experience of my own, in which I made myself vulnerable to infection (HIV) and (potentially) part of the queer-dominated collective unconscious of degenerate, terminal sexual shame. My shift toward sexual risk, as onto-epistemological site, occurred during a revision process of *Pink Lemonade*, which included Hannah and Carey. In one scene, I narrated Fox (one participant) calling me to describe how he left a “less-than-transcendental” sexual encounter, went to Starbucks immediately afterward, and accidentally dropped his cock ring (which slid off and out from under his shorts) in front of the whole café. Tink. Tink. Tink. It rolled all the way across the floor from cash register to Order Pick Up. This cheeky, salacious narrative kernel stayed out of initial renderings of Fox’s collegiate experience. However, I subsequently added it as a type of character sketch to illuminate Fox’s sexual personality. I was fascinated by someone who could casually engage in promiscuity and have the self-confidence to flaunt it publicly (which, in this instance, included displaying his sexual accessory in a coffee shop on campus). Within the context of the vignette, the cock ring kernel did little to move the narrative arc forward or illuminate some aspect of the homophobic climate in which Fox and I lived. Thus, it was largely unnecessary. Unnecessary *until* I shared an experience of public sexual risk (hooking up with a massage therapist at the Four Seasons Hotel during a treatment) that made Fox’s story more fascinating, personally. I put the cock ring kernel back in. Hannah, in her subsequent review, suggested removing the cock ring kernel again, since it was likely to distract readers without necessarily advancing a central onto-epistemological goal. I took the cock ring kernel back out. My tryst with the massage therapist stayed out, too.

The Dead: Resurrected by Hannah

I’m feeling a little overwhelmed by these data—not the content, but the amount of things that could be curated and said. The following quote from Teddy is literally about trash; it is also about sustainability and ongoing efforts (like research projects) that exist in perpetuity. The “event” here is this idea of a sustainability class that might give structure, purpose, and meaning to an existing lived value (environmentalism), but that “fabricates” an identity of a student of sustainability in a class.

Teddy tells Benjamin:

I’ve always had an interest in nature. When I was little, my granddad, he owned a big back hoe and dump truck business. He would take me out with him and we would go collect creek gravel and stuff. We would go out to creeks and nature, and

he taught me a ton about nature and trying to preserve it as much as possible. I don't like to see things wasted. I don't like to see nature messed up for no reason. I've always recycled, and I try to reduce my impact as much as possible, which I was always kind of a weird one in high school because, in a Southern town, nobody really cared about that. They all had big trucks and whatever. Nature's beautiful and we're all on the same planet, and it's all that we really have, so we should take care of it. Once I got into college, I had to take Intro to Sustainability. I wasn't really familiar with the concept of Sustainability as a discipline. Then getting into the class, I found out there's a social aspect of Sustainability as well as economic and environmental aspects. Social sustainability was really interesting, especially being a gay person, because we talked a lot about equality and equity among all groups. Once I learned the social aspects of it, that's where my interest in community planning comes in. You can use sustainability principles to be equitable to everyone and give everyone equal opportunity.

Teddy reinforces formal education and curriculum as spaces of “valid” (read formal) knowledge—having to take a sustainability class, that sustainability is a study/discipline—as if people without access to formal education weren't already practicing “sustainability.” Formal education systems can give us spaces and language to name things that are part of our lived experiences; they also sustain themselves as places where “official” knowledge originates. There are also some parallels here about “sustaining” himself as a queer person in a larger ecosystem—not seeing “nature messed up for no reason”—he seems to advocate a queerness naturally empathizes with a sustainability project, since queerness must perpetually resist being “messed up” for no reason.

The Living

Benjamin's (my) original impressionistic rendering of Teddy's college experience focused, almost exclusively, on Teddy's work as a drag queen in a local dive bar. My interview protocol starts with a line of questioning about the individual's academic interests or career ambitions. I want to give the sense that I am interested in them as a whole person. Not just as a gay/queer person. However, in *Pink Lemonade*, I rarely curated the men's academic or professional interests, which is odd considering Teddy's romantic partner, who shared the chapter with him, was a recent graduate of the cognitive science doctoral program. When I first introduce Teddy, I provide a mixture of quotes and renderings of his “Club look.”

Teddy: I'm a new gay. <<<Club look: Black cap, worn backward, black denim, Spiderman top, black suede heels, Louboutin style.>>>

I latched onto the “new gay” phrase for a number of reasons. Teddy was the younger man in the relationship with his partner Adolfo. Teddy was younger than I was by nearly a decade. Teddy was almost the youngest person in the data set (only one other man, at that time, was younger). Teddy also came from an extremely rural area, like

I did, and he prefaced many stories with his rural upbringing or his being working class. Due to that adolescent context, he narrated his romantic experiences with women. These experiences mimicked my own decade-long history dating and/or sleeping with women in a desperate attempt to turn myself straight. Thus, I hinged.

Teddy: In high school, I dated girls and stuff. When I was dating girls, I saw them, and I would think, 'Oh, I would date her.' Or whatever. Girls don't have crushes on me anymore, now that I don't hold it back or act straight. People can tell I guess. The change in mannerisms happened, because I was like, 'I'm going to do what I'm going to do.' I dated one guy back home. Not a single person knew. We couldn't risk someone finding out. Then I came here and saw guys as datable. It was a learning experience.

I included some quotes about his desire for an LGBT curriculum, but I did not prioritize that line of narrative, even though Hannah discerned Teddy's need for "official" knowledge that validates his beliefs and/or experiences.

Teddy: When I came to [Persimmon University], I had no idea that there was an LGBT group. Maybe a class or something? Or maybe LGBT history? I may not have taken it my first semester, but once I did let people know that I was gay, and wasn't hiding it, I think it would have been cool to learn about gays and our history.

My rendering of Teddy's life, in comparison to Hannah's curated selections, is purely ethnographic. I detail how he formed relationships after coming out. I provide extensive observation notes of his drag performances. I quote him discussing queer role models, like Ellen DeGeneres. Though thorough and focused, I cannot easily point to an "actionable result" based on the narrative provided. Providing "actionable results" has never been a priority of mine, because it assumes that one queer man's experience can provide an adequate tool to be unilaterally applied to all queer people. It can't. Hence, my autoethnographic, curation-as-analysis approach. However, when considering Hannah's selection of Teddy's discussion of sustainability coursework, we can see an expanded view of Teddy (as more than a drag queen or boyfriend) *and* an actionable result. It is important, as a queer man myself, to be interesting beyond my queer identity. As mentioned earlier, queer subjects are often rendered only visible in research projects aimed at correcting queer risk: suicide, sexual deviance, drug use, workplace discrimination, and interpersonal violence. Certainly, these "risks" afflict queer subjects at disproportionately high rates; however, these risks are not central to the queer experience, nor should they define queerness to the populace at large. In particular, sexual deviance (often attached to the alleged promiscuity in the queer community) connotes queerness and queerness connotes sexual deviance; however, promiscuity need not necessarily connote risk. Rather, much queer activism is devoted to celebrating sexual expression as well as body positivity, reclaiming sexuality (and "deviance") as a means to resist oppression and take ownership of bodily autonomy. As a scholar, Benjamin (I) attempt to broaden the lens by which we view queer subjects while

simultaneously feeling compelled to address the “risks” inherent in some (not all) queer experiences. The line is fine: I want to reduce reliance upon queer tropes of risk while also reducing the exposure of queer subjects to various forms of violence (to which they are exposed, especially in a collegiate context), which necessitates highlighting and enunciating new iterations of queer collegiate risks.

In my initial rendering of Teddy’s experiences, for example, I did not necessarily enable Teddy to be interesting beyond his (stereotypical) queer identity. Teddy’s interest in sustainability and equity is a queer inclination, yes, but it depicts Teddy as philanthropically minded, scientific, and academically serious (as opposed to popular representations of gay/queer men as superficial and vapid, like in the most recent incarnation of *Queer Eye*). As an actionable result, Hannah’s resurrection indicates that many marginalized subjects may feel validated and encouraged by representation in formal curricula, even if formal curricula are not inherently necessary to validate queer (or other marginalized) experiences.

The Dead: Resurrected by Carey

Like Hannah, I feel overwhelmed by these data. The ethnographic nature of them means they roam over people’s lives. There is much to be unpacked. I am saddened by what’s redacted. What am I missing? The narratives feel somewhat broken (up) in this form. Yet, there are complete narratives within them. I selected a mini-narrative from Adolfo. One that caught my attention about identity and incompatibility and intentionality about what is shared where:

I dress up as women and perform as women. I impersonate women and participate in drag culture. I got into it because it’s fun, and I’ve done it quite a few times. And that’s something you [Benjamin] just mentioned: gay lifestyle, or mainstream gay lifestyle, that’s sort of incompatible with academia. The thought has crossed my mind: “What would another colleague think... If I went on the job market or I went on an interview, or even if I was tenure track faculty, and they found out that I do drag or that I perform in drag... And to be quite honest with you, I’m not even sure what the answer would be. I’m not sure that, at least in my department, and the people that I know, I think that the work that I do, and my place in the department is enough that if someone found out I did drag, it would be accepted. It might be, “My God that’s so funny.” A lot of the people that I have told, they laugh about it, and they think it’s interesting. Some have come and seen me perform. But then I definitely know that that’s probably just been, not luck, but I’ve also picked and chosen... I pick carefully the people that I’ve let know about that. I’m not so sure I’d be okay with everybody, saying, “Hey, I do drag on the weekends. Why don’t you come and watch?” Versus if it was my playing football during the weekends or going hunting during the weekends. There are activities that definitely lend themselves to... What’s it called? Water cooler talk?

Adolfo makes clear, here and elsewhere in the transcript, that he claims an identity as an intellectual and as an academic. He’s chosen that path at the expense of easier,

more fun paths. He is also clear about his connection to drag culture, which is “a piece of [him] that [he] can’t openly talk about.” There’s something here that points to the heteronormative culture of the academy—masculine pastimes like football and hunting belong at the water cooler; they are compatible with work life writ large. Those who share those activities do not have to be choosy with what they share. They do not have to think carefully about what that would mean to be “on the job market,” “on an interview,” or junior faculty in the department *and* participate in a “lifestyle” that is outside the “mainstream.” The concern about commonality does not matter when the chosen activities map onto heteronormative expectations.

What cognitive space and energy is “trashed” or “killed” by picking and choosing with whom to be authentic? What’s “trashed” when the water cooler isn’t your place to share about what you do outside work? What’s preserved when professional spaces and lifestyle are kept separate?

The Living

Carey’s instinct led her to Adolfo’s narration of professional performance. In Benjamin’s (my) view, Adolfo does drag in all of his public life. He performs Drag at the bar on Saturday nights (with his partner, Teddy). But, according to this narrative, he performs drag (with a lower-case “d”) everyday in the office, since he must pick and choose which kind of masculinity to enact based on which role he’s serving or which colleague with whom he’s interacting. I suspect Carey instinctually hinged on this excerpt since women have long been subject to similar compulsions to professional, masculine-dominated drag. Carey, for example, teaches social foundations to pre-service teachers. Within that course, one lesson centers on gender roles within the classroom and within the professional of K-12 education. Women make up over 80% of the teaching population; however, women are only approximately 52% of the school leadership. Education is an overwhelmingly “female” profession that is disproportionately supervised by a “male” perspective. Carey had to navigate an intellectual and professional détente during the writing of *Pink Lemonade*; the program chair for my program (Administration of Higher Education) was a man. At the time, the other faculty of Administration of Higher Education were men. I selected Carey as a dissertation chair due to her methodological expertise (my program chair was a statistician without experience in qualitative methodology) *and* her content expertise as faculty of social foundations. Yet, her status as “Chair” was constantly challenged by the male program chair, who frequently second-guessed her judgments or who routinely attempted to take *Pink Lemonade* in a different methodological direction. The program chair did not challenge the academic authority of his male colleagues to the same degree, thus I assumed that the détente stemmed from gendered bias. Since that détente occurred in tandem with this project and its data generation phase, it is not surprising that Carey hinged her own behind

the scenes experience of professional drag performance with Adolfo's narrative of doing Drag/drag in his everyday life.

Carey's curated excerpt differs from my rendering of Adolfo's life as presented in *Pink Lemonade*. When I came to Adolfo, I instinctually mined moments within his narrative that included reflections on his upbringing in Miami among a Cuban and Puerto Rican family. To that point in my work, I recruited only white, gay men. I was disappointed in that achievement, because I felt that I could not fully label my work a holistic, inclusive account of queer experience on my campus if all my people were racially and economically homogenous. Adolfo was my first interview with someone who identified as not White, nor from my home state, for that matter. Thus, I let his ethnic roots take center stage in my curation:

Adolfo: Being Cuban and Puerto Rican, and having grown up in Miami, cooking is something that is super important to me. Every family event that I've ever had was centered around food. Food makes most people happy. I cook. I always tell people: It's how you communicate. I collect a lot of time and energy into something I've prepared. People come over, and they'll appreciate it. That's an attraction. That's inclusion. I've struggled with the question: 'Is there anything about your cultural heritage that you feel creates additional burdens for coming out?' I think there is a cultural element to coming out. In some minority groups, it's harder to come out. Black culture can be different from Hispanic culture can be different from Asian culture. With Latin culture, and definitely in Miami, I think it's harder to come out.

I chose this excerpt from Adolfo's narrative because it fulfilled my impulse to include "data" that hinted at some type of discreet interpretation or conclusion. Cooking and sharing food is hospitality, is inclusion. Adolfo provides a culturally flavored rendering of what inclusion looks like to him, thus we can use that rendering to inform how we make educational environments inclusive and hospitable. Adolfo also provides a nuanced rendering of the intersectional pressure of being an ethnic and gender minority. What I found most compelling, though, is that Adolfo demonstrates that his inclusive practice need not be targeted to certain, discrete aspects of his identity. His cooking brings together all components of his identity to serve all components of his social and familial network.

The Dead: Resurrected by Hannah and Carey

Dusty spoke to Benjamin about his career ambitions; he wants to be a couturier, and he practices his craftsmanship by making custom drag costumes at a rate of two per week. He performs in a local drag show every Saturday night. He is reluctant to wear the same outfit twice, nor does he choose to wear pieces that are conventional evening gowns or cocktail dresses (a foundation of a drag wardrobe). Dusty said to Benjamin:

I've always been, I'll admit, very shallow; I enjoy material things. I think that comes, not because it has a label on it, but because I enjoy the feeling. I guess

that's what makes me a fashion design major. I just like rich stuff or nice stuff or couture pieces. That would be my dream. If I have a closet of couture pieces, I feel like I'm going to be set. I think we all dream bigger for ourselves. My parents started very poor, because they're military; my dad's built himself up. We had a very nice childhood, from what I can remember. And I want to be able to have that same lifestyle. I don't want to have to downgrade. Right now in college, I don't have a job, but that's cuz my anxiety problem. I've never had a boyfriend, really. And like my mom was like, if you want a job, get a job. But I'm starting my own brand. If I need money, I'll go make money; I'll just make something for someone and then I'll have money. Financially I need to be successful because I'm very expensive. Not in the sense of I like really expensive things. But like, things happen to me a lot that cost a lot of money. Like parking tickets. Or like my old apartment, my whole carpet had to be replaced because I spilled a whole bottle of wine on it. That cost five-hundred dollars. My parents tell me that I'm definitely the most expensive child. I need at least some kind of income that's going to be able to handle that.

Dusty acknowledges that he's expensive—parking tickets, replacing carpets, interest in material things that are of high quality. There is an analogy between fast fashion that is eventually trashed (made with disposability in mind or made to be trendy...for one season) and the type of clothing that Dusty is interested in making and wearing (couture). But Dusty's drag costumes will only be worn once or twice (i.e. his goal of making two new costumes for every Friday night), and he makes one-off pieces for friends when he needs money. His puffed-up version of fast fashion communicates some level of achievement or arrival that exceeds his own sense of self; by that, we mean he articulates fulfillment in his fashion activities in the same breath as mentioning he does not have a boyfriend. He draws this juxtaposition between what his classmates are interested in making (what's wearable) and his work that is more avant-garde (you could not wear it unless you were in a nightclub, and even then, it is a performance), but both are about communicating some aspect of wealth—the stereotype of the rich, Southern woman who dreams of “having my own boutique” (if she has to have a job at all) and the idea that you can make costumes or high fashion that are only to be worn/seen once.

The Living

Benjamin (I) also chose to focus on Dusty's fashion choices and burgeoning fashion career; however, I chose to focus on Dusty's use of fashion to “genderfuck” (Dusty's term). I did not, as did Hannah and Carey, use his narrative to explore socioeconomics. I opened Dusty's chapter with observation notes I made from watching him perform for the first time:

Dusty's chest is always on display. His drag ensemble, regardless of theme, includes a sheer top (or no top) revealing his “boy body” from navel to neck. He does not reveal a faux bosom. Instead he reminds us that his femininity is an illusion. A

“genderfuck.” With each twirl, we see the flat chest of a nineteen-year-old boy. My first time seeing Dusty perform, his genderfucking encompassed: climbing onto the bar to perform Florence and the Machine’s “Dog Days Are Over,” during a dramatic flourish, his ginger wig caught the flap of a ceiling fan, flew off his head, and landed ten feet away in a pitcher of daiquiris. He climbed down, took the microphone, and concluded, “That’s why I named my alter-ego ‘Mess.’” Closed with a back handspring and disappeared behind a black, bedazzled curtain that separated a makeshift dressing room (in which shipping crates served as a vanity) from the bar at-large.

Dusty explained genderfucking as a radical position, even within the drag world. I guess I initially latched onto this strand of narrative because it seemed gossipy, with an insider scoop. Drag culture? Behind-the-scenes? Spill the tea, sis. However, as Dusty spoke at length about drag queens complaining about his wardrobe or telling him to start “padding and painting,” I realized that the “genderfucking” was one of the more radical acts that any of my participants performed. Dusty’s gender fluidity and willingness to critique binary gender identities (even within the context of parody, i.e. drag) rattled even the so-called gender/sexual progressives, an identity that drag performers like to think they embody. Genderfucking, of course, rattled the peers in Dusty’s classes on campus, who were much more conservative in dress and behavior. I asked Dusty what I should do to see how it feels to genderfuck on the campus. He told me to paint my nails and go about my day. I did. People I’d known for years took pause, stopped paying attention to what I was saying, only stared at my hands. Some asked why. A simple gender transgression created frequent and profound changes in how I was treated. Hannah and Carey may have focused on social class and fast fashion because I redacted Dusty’s genderfucking testimony. However, I wonder how they might have fared under a similar exercise. In the context we worked, masculinity was/is much more admired; it is also much more fragile. Men are gender policed heavily; for example, many local bars have dress codes designed exclusively to keep out femme and/or gay men (men may not wear jewelry; men may not wear deep v-neck t-shirts; men may not wear graphic t-shirts, a rule applied after the community’s first Pride festival; men may not wear makeup, which is also a rule at many gay bath houses). Would Hannah and Carey (or cis-gendered women generally) experience the same level of policing if they adopted one stereotypically masculine manner of dress? I recall Fox (of the cock ring kernel) phoning me one evening after he went to a local bar. Fox left the bar to walk to his apartment. Before he even made his way down the block, some men exited the back door of the bar and attacked Fox in the alleyway. They did not steal from him; they beat him for his identity transgression(s), since Fox has the body language and manner of speaking that immediately betray his sexual orientation.

I did not mention Fox’s attack in *Pink Lemonade*. The attack happened long after I interviewed him and wrote my chapter about him. He never reported the incident to the police; he did not want any investigations made as to what he might have

done to provoke an attack. Said investigations would make his sexual orientation part of public record. He did not mind if I shared what happened, but I chose not to use it anyway. At least not until I reflected on Dusty's radical gender performance. What Dusty does is dangerous. Fox's experience demonstrates the risk. However, what Dusty does is necessary so that eventually his genderfucking is benign.

Postlude

Our work provides researchers with avenues for revisiting and revitalizing data from projects past. Our lenses of haecceity and queer methodology helped us to reflect on and reimagine possibilities for data that would otherwise have been left discarded, despite these data representing lived experiences of participants (like Fox, Teddy, Adolfo, and Dusty) whose stories are perpetually in motion. Those data informed our research, teaching, and administrative praxis at the time they were first generated, and they have the power to continuously inform praxis, especially when re-curated by new readers who shed light on possibilities to which prior readers were blind. We compare the totality of our process to artists exhibiting visual work. They create work, and they are often involved in displaying their work in galleries and museums during their lifetime. Subsequent curators continuously exhibit their work in perpetuity, allowing new generations of viewers experience the work(s) on their terms; even performance is captured on film and re-curated to give a glimpse into an artist's life/work in "floating time." Thus, the "capture" and the "curating" extend the scope of "floating time." At the core, this project underscores the need to re-curate data as if we (researchers) are bringing new generations of viewers to transformative experiences that never had a static end nor a final say.

Re-curating also requires the researcher to challenge themselves as theorists, empiricists, and analysts. There is ease within the academic tradition of neatly packaging a data set into a publication then setting said package on a shelf to be left to others to locate, inspect, and interpret. Our disciplines encourage moving on to new, novel data. However, "moving on" does not necessarily enable researchers the challenge of mining data, interrogating prior assumptions, and or recontextualizing lived experiences across different moments in time. In our work, these men's lives should not be considered informative (valuable) to praxis at the moment we generated, captured, and curated data; their lives are informative (valuable) across time and their messages adapt to yield new insights when cast against varied interpretive perspectives and social circumstances. Outside of onto-epistemological concerns, our project advocates resurrecting dead data as part of a social justice orientation. Do not kill the data simply because they are not perceived as fresh, novel, or suited to contemporary contexts.

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