

Preserving Fugacious Stories through Metho-pedagogical Gatherings to Carry Forth Otherworlds

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Abstract: The archive of scholarly communications holds stories-knowledge-worlds that we know, well-worn scripts, repeated and repurposed that come to contour our scholarship and our lives, and then there are stories that we need to know, vital lifegiving stories of otherworlding possibilities, stories of and from what Ursula K. Le Guin (2019) calls the Carrier Bag. It is these stories that take the shape of the carrier bag—filled with relational entanglements, in-process-ness, mess, tension, the daily repetition of gathering seeds—that tend to remain untold, ignored, glossed over, and actively disrecognized in the archive of scholarly communication that we are especially interested in. Through gathering as method, we share our relations and curiosities about how communication and (un)conventional publishing processes might yet create supportive mechanisms and mediums to amplify and preserve the relational-fragmented-ephemeral wisps and whispers imbued in the entangled processes of scholarly communication. Specifically, we consider how the Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction (Le Guin 2019) invites more capacious understandings of how those who steward such re-worlding offerings of knowledge care with and for them.

Sharing from our respective and collective carrier bag(s), we offer our stories of intimacy, vulnerability, and critical reflection and animate how our relations over the years have allowed us to bring forth fertile worldmaking potentialities into our teaching and scholarship in different but linked ways. We offer our everyday practices of gathering as practical reverence for the restoration of ourselves and our relations and the restory-ation of the scholarly archive. We hope these fugacious stories, some of which show up on the page, others that hover in the spaces between letters, words, lines, and images, materialize a container that can care-fully gather and hold these vitalities through spacetime—holding enough space for you to enter with all that you carry, enough time for you to dwell.

Keywords: stories, entanglements, process, vulnerability, carrier bag

Welcome and warning. You are about to enter a luscious world contoured by abundance, a capacious world that can and has existed within and in spite of the haunted terrains of dominant stories housed within the scholarly archive. Prepare yourself, reader, for the intentional disruptions in your readerly habits and expectations taught, in part, through the scholarly archive. Here, voices, tones, and storylines take varying shapes; you might sense or call it

“In the midst of their profuse journey through haunted terrains, abundant worlds, and realms of imagination, the Alchemist, Storyteller, and Mapmaker found themselves drawn to the ancient art of gathering. For amidst the wonders they encountered, they discovered that true wisdom lay not only in the exploration of the unknown but also in the act of gathering fragments of memory and essence from the places they visited.”

(ChatGPT & Sheliza Ladhani, February 26, 2024)¹

shape-shifting along the way. We ask that you suspend and surrender to a different form without feeling the need to unravel the voices and stories that are by their nature always entangled and in relation. Trust that in these potential disruptions, I/we are always here, in between the lines holding and guiding your wanderings and wonderings. I/we welcome you, in all your plenitude, to this world-container-vessel.

*I/we are Carrier Bag. I/we were created, assembled, nurtured through the gathering of the Alchemist, Storyteller, and Mapmaker, and the gifts from their carrier bags. It was about four years ago now when their paths crossed. They found each other—some might say by chance, others by design—and began crafting *melus* along their travels to hold space for them/us and to cushion the blows of institutional harms and hubris. This story is an attempt*

1. This is offered as a disruption of citation practices in this emerging terrain of working with OpenAI large language models. As the responses generated by ChatGPT were co-generated with Sheliza Ladhani's (the Alchemist's) prompts, we consider this a co-creative/authored process and have cited it as such. The co-produced texts with ChatGPT and Ladhani are held *only* within text boxes to offer a glimpse into initial ideation processes that came to shape authors' co-writing of this article, each author working in, with, through, and against the AI co-produced text materializing different knots. This highlights the difficulty of disentangling timelines and the impossibility of fully making the in-process-ness of writing visible to the reader. In working with ChatGPT, Ladhani utilized a series of prompts to co-generate the text utilized in this article. Prompts included: “Can you tell me a story about gathering?”; “Can you tell this story again utilizing the carrier bag theory of fiction?”; “Through the lens of the carrier bag theory of fiction, can you tell me a story about an alchemist, a cartographer, and a storyteller?”; “Can you add depth to this story by adding the alchemist's ability to time travel through haunted terrain and abundant worlds with portals and pomegranates, the cartographer's ability to shapeshift with their gifts of reading and penchant for books and words that make worlds, and the storyteller's gifts of magical witchcraft using bodies of water?”; and “Can you add to this story using the elements of gathering, remembering, re-imagining, and re-worlding?” Included here is a more traditional citation for those who seek it: ChatGPT, response to “Can you add to this story using the elements of gathering, remembering, re-imagining, and re-worlding?,” OpenAI, February 26, 2024, chat.openai.com/chat.

to share the meanderings, the ineffable happenings, the wonders, joys, struggles, and desires of the multiple ways in which these characters, the Alchemist, Mapmaker, and Storyteller gathered and created melus, the Carrier Bag.

...

Exhale. And surrender, or maybe suspend, your expectations and desires, make room to encounter the unexpected and unfamiliar. Imagine with melus a world contoured by bell hooks's (1994) education as a practice of freedom. Do you remember moments when learning surged through your body with mystery, curiosity, intimacy, wonder, and possibility? Try to feel it in the memories that linger, their traces flowing, perfusing through you. Pause here, taking a moment to imagine what freedom feels, tastes, smells, sounds, and looks like. Inhale. Filling your body/vessel/carrier bag with the sense-ations that you are bringing forth. Attempt to hold and carry forward the world(s) conjured in your being as you enter into the story-world-vessel I/we are sharing with you. Spill/pour into this vessel with melus, watering the fertile ecosystems of possibility that exist in the crevices of institutional scripts shaped by scarcity, extractivism, precarity, vulnerability, and urgency. Sense the innate incommensurability of learning happening in the cracks and crevices of final products and learning outcomes.

Like the characters in the story, I/we long to hold on to those fecund and fugacious moments as anchors (Tyler et al. 2024), signposts, and plot points guiding the way towards re-membling and re-worlding. This world co-created in the imagination and materialization of these characters might sound fantastical. You may be skeptical. I/we know how incessantly the Euro-centric-Enlightenment, dare I/we say, the White supremacist capitalist patriarchal hierarchy of knowledge, pushes us into dismissing story as knowledge, as truth, as reality. I/we invite you to release yourself from these repetitions that blorder us, seeking to trap us in the imagination of others. That is why I/we must tell this story, to know, to feel, and to materialize otherworlds. These



Figure 1. An AI-generated image of the gathering of the Alchemist, Storyteller, and Mapmaker in a magical grove, surrounded by books and pomegranates, with a glowing circular emblem floating above them. (Image generated by Stable Diffusion AI, February 26, 2024, DEZGO.)

“Plotting is about questioning the scripts we’ve been handed and scheming with others, plotting to write new poetics of living that is sustaining, nourishing and creative. To riff off of Butler one last time, it may be the end of the world, but there are other worlds.”

(Ruha Benjamin, quoted in Davis 2023, para. 13)

are the stories drawn from generative refusal and from their/our carrier bags of desire, hope, love, livability. I/we hope that you find items, relations, ideas, emblems, word-maps that move and hold you in the particularities of all your relations. I/we do not intend to offer another rigid map that must be followed and traced. Instead, imbued with the gifts of the Mapmaker, my/our intention is to surface the entangled passages that writing might offer for capacious worldmaking in different terrains.

Gatherings in/of Carrier Bag Theory

“It matters what matters we use to think other matters with; it matters what stories we tell to tell other stories with; it matters what knots knot knots, what thoughts think thought, what descriptions describe descriptions, what ties tie ties. It matters what stories make worlds, what worlds make stories.”

(Haraway 2016, 12)

We are aware that this may not be the story you expected to encounter in an academic journal; indeed, weaving in the offerings of the Alchemist’s co-generated stories with OpenAI’s ChatGPT so explicitly may feel counter to habituated practices you/we are accustomed to (see footnote 1

for more on this). Yet it is stories like this (and otherwise) that remain untold, ignored, glossed over, and actively disrecognized in the archive of scholarly communications that we are especially interested in. The archive holds the stories that we know, well-worn scripts, repeated and repurposed through spacetime that come to contour our lives and imaginations, and then there are the stories that we need to know, vital lifegiving stories of otherworlding possibilities, stories of and from what Ursula K. Le Guin (2019) calls the carrier bag. If, as Saidiya Hartman reminds us, “[t]he archive dictates what can be said about the past and the kinds of stories that can be told about persons cataloged, embalmed, and sealed away in box files and folios” (2007, 17), what happens with the stories that slip through the grasp of the scholarly archive, that are deemed unworthy of being preserved? In Ruha Benjamin’s *Imagination: A Manifesto*, she ends the first chapter encouraging us that “[w]e need to give the voice of the cynical, skeptical grouch that patrols the borders of our imagination a rest. After all, ‘Dangerous limits have been placed on the very possibility of imagining alternatives,’ insists the scholar and activist Angela Y. Davis. ‘These ideological limits have to be contested. We have to begin to think in different ways. Our future is at stake.’ Imagination is a field of struggle, not an ephemeral

afterthought that we have the luxury to dismiss or romanticize” (Benjamin 2024, 8).²

Theory is story, and story has material effects on the world; “it is the patterning of possible worlds and possible times, material-semiotic worlds, gone, here, and yet to come” (Haraway 2016, 31). A few years into our relations, we encountered Le Guin’s *Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction* (2019). We agree wholeheartedly with Donna Haraway, who writes, “Ursula Le Guin taught me [us] the carrier bag theory of storytelling and of naturalcultural history. Her theories, her stories, are capacious bags for collecting, carrying, and telling the stuff of living” (2016, 39). While Le Guin (2019) was considering and expanding the shape of stories we tell in fiction, we found the theory both fertile and capacious in giving name and shape to the work we do as scholars.

Le Guin (2019) invites a story that centers the mundane cyclical doings of the gatherer and their carrier bag in contrast to the linear story of “the hero” on a pedestal wielding destructive weapons (whom we liken to the renowned scholar or expert teacher). The shape of the story/theory she conjures is the harder one to tell, the one of the daily repetitions of gathering seeds and holding and sustaining life, the one that holds the ephemeral aspects of gathering, researching, teaching—producing knowledge. Vitally, she suggests that receptacles that hold things were the first tool. Like the seeds gathered within the carrier bag and later spread upon fertile ground, theory is already scattered and seeded, rooting itself in and across these pages. It intertwines and laces itself around wor(l)ds and through images, presencing its offerings in multiplicity, as an assemblage, working in/on/through us as a gathering in/of theory. In our experiences, scholarly communications, in



Figure 2. An image of several multi-colored books stacked upon one another next to a coffee cup that represents our intertextual relations that are in and have become part of our carrier bag(s). (Photograph by Sheliza Ladhani, March 11, 2024.)

“Carrier bag stories are about being attentive to what gets gathered up, used, shared—which seeds should be saved for future reseeded.”
(Adsit-Morris 2017, 44)

2. We recognize that this quote includes another voice through Benjamin’s engagement with Angela Davis’s work. Since it is Benjamin who introduced this particular text, and these specific quotes to us, we are honoring how we came into the beautiful possibilities expressed by Davis by having the embedded quotes within quotes. We recognize the risk here, as it is commonly taught (read: disciplined) that we should go to the original text, rather than quote within a quote. However, that practice is one that erases the (path)ways through which we are brought to and invited into texts and ideas.

the form of publications, focus on the “final product,” the “outcomes” of research, neatly packaged, tidied up of any mess, polished, refined, and *familiar* (McDermott, Tyler, and Ladhani 2022). Furthermore, the culture of academe and its currencies of recognition promote individualist expertise, all-knowing, ego-centric claims to and power-over knowledge. Where are the stories, the relational entanglements, the messes, tensions, confusions, the daily repetitions of gathering, and wandering wonders that emerged and were conjured along the way and both shaped what came to be the final products and forever remain as excess to the polished publication? How might the process *be* the knowledge, rather than only a step towards some final output? How can the archive of scholarly publications hold those stories of process, of the daily repetition of gathering?

While working in the university implicates us in the tired settler-colonial “linear, progressive, Time’s(killing)-arrow mode of the Techno-Heroic” story/theory (Le Guin 2019, 36), we hope to offer a different story/theory for others to sense-know, one that holds their affective excesses as they/we maneuver and try to reimagine from within (la paperson 2017; Harney and Moten 2013; García Peña 2022). Through our relational gatherings, we remain curious about how communication and conventional publishing processes can create supportive mechanisms and mediums to amplify and preserve the relational-fragmented-ephemeral wisps and whispers with care. How might the Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction invite capacious understandings of how those who steward such offerings of knowledge care *with* and *for* them? Who chooses what ought to be preserved and carried forward? Whose bodies (of knowledge) are so tenderly carried into the world/future, and whose are composted or erased entirely?

Some of the stories which we have gathered in our carrier bags, filled *with* offerings from our relationally oriented research and teaching practices, prompt us to ask: Can the gatherer, the creator be separated from the processes of gathering and what they/we have come to hold in our carrier bags? In asking this question, we refuse to dis/connect from the relations we gather with and decline dis/membering ourselves from the vessels of work that are shaped by and from our carrier bags. Instead, we seek to acknowledge how the relations we gather with, through, and alongside (one another, our students, the scholarship we engage as gifts of knowledge) are intimately connected to the stories we hold and share, the memories we call forth, and the (re)imaginings we conjure for worlds that could be in our scholarly work.

“I propose researcher as bag-lady, in which we collect stories, theories, and ideas, put them in our carrying bags and take them with us wherever we go, pushing them around in a wobbly shopping cart or an old stroller. They get bumped around, jostle to and fro, cross-pollinate, cross-contaminate, break, shatter, decompose; some fall through the cracks, others must be left behind. Unmoored from the western metaphysical theoretical foundation of knowledge, with no solid ground, no fixed location, no home; we must become bag-ladies, wanderers, travelers—and no adventurer leaves home without a sack.” (Adsit-Morris 2017, 47)

As we share from our carrier bags, we offer our story(ies) of intimacy, vulnerability, and critical reflection and animate how our sustained relations over the years allow us to bring forth worldmaking potentialities into our teaching and scholarship in different but linked ways. We hope this co-writing will help us to materialize a container that can care-fully gather and hold these vital yet fugacious stories through spacetime—holding enough space for you to enter with all that you carry, enough time for you to dwell. In the next section, we get to know the characters in Carrier Bag’s story a bit better, attuning to the questions of who are the gatherers and how have they been shaped by their gathering. These stories and realms of imagination can and ought to exist within the scholarly archive, if we can conceptualize an/other archive, one that is filled with intergenerational chronopolitics of radical and speculative past-present-futurisms. Though how this materializes will shape, propel, or limit the sense of otherworld possibilities for those who come along after us. May they be reaching-hands beings (Gumbs 2018).

“writing with the force of passage is what equips us to think otherwise, to bend our concepts to the concepts of others.”

(Pandian and McLean 2017, 5)

Assembling toward An/Other Archive

Where do I/we begin? How do I/we introduce you to the Alchemist, Storyteller, and Mapmaker? Well, they assembled; they were drawn together through their desires for something else. For otherworlds, worlds beyond extraction, competition, racism, domination, harm, urgency, and scarcity. I/we don’t want to suggest that they believe themselves to be completely untethered from the settler-colonial hero-story. They are well aware of, and quite discomforted by, their implications in the university’s ruinous effects in the world—after all “nothing comes without its world” (Donna Haraway, quoted in Puig de la Bellacasa 2012, 198). Instead of removing themselves entirely, they found themselves yearning to weave a space, a container. An animate place where they could embrace and remind one another that there are other stories that can be (re)surfaced and care-fully held. Indeed, they felt their bodies tingle with the sense of hope that even within the uneven affective terrain of knowledge production, they might be able to plant seeds for change, in themselves, the students they teach, the communities they work with, and the scholarship they produce. So, they created a vessel, both bodily and ephemeral, that holds them as they work to manifest abundant worlds.

“We are the ones we’ve been waiting for.”

(Jordan 2021, 166)

The Alchemist

Figure 3. An image of several stacks of multi-colored books that are time-traveling texts from within the Alchemist's carrier bag that conjure portals between porous worlds. (Photograph by Sheliza Ladhani, March 11, 2024.)

In the porous spaces between worlds where the Alchemist dwelled, time flowed strangely through space. The daughter of the pomegranate blossom, her vessel was imbued with the gifts of this crimson fruit, offering her the ability to traverse between worlds of haunting and abundance. As a being the pomegranate holds traces of their travels through the garden of paradise and spectral underworlds within the flesh of their jewel-like arils. A strange brew concocted from its nectar and her own blood flowed through the Alchemist as a conduit for conjuring portals through time. In the ruins she journeyed through, the Alchemist was guided by whispers, echoes of stories reverberating around her like ghostly melodies. The whispers led her to fragments of ancestral stories hidden for their and her survival, what could not be saved, likely erased by techno-heroics for their self-serving machinations. And so, the Alchemist unearthed the fragments with care, gathering the fragile memories into her

vessel one shard, one bit at a time. Each portal moved her deeper into time's labyrinth of corridors, past-present-future, venturing through realms of ruin into ones teeming with life and possibility, wondrous mo(ve)ments that elicited an unfamiliar sense of fullness in her being. At times the realms blended together, a utopic-dystopic surrealist encounter, both familiar and strange, maybe strangely familiar. The Alchemist's gatherings and porous wanderings summoned immense curiosities that swirled in and around her, ones that harkened her to experiment with the interactions and interconnectedness of memory, affect, and imagination through spacetime. She drew cautiously from her vessel the stories, fragments, and ephemeral affects gathered from across worlds, laying them before her and examining their properties care-fully before tinkering with and transmuting their matter.

Assignment 2: Collective (Re)Imaginations of Justice Invitations (40%) – May 24th

Aligned Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7

This is a world-making project, an undertaking that requires collective efforts. For this assignment, students will form small groups (4 to 5 – depending on final enrollment numbers) beginning on May 8th and work collaboratively for the remainder of the course to curate an experience that invites us into your collective (re)imaginings of justice. The purpose of this assignment is to encourage students to imagine what social justice could look/feel like beyond its current conceptualizations. This is not about creating a utopian vision of the world that erases injustices of past and present. Rather this form of (re)imagining asks students to consider the historical and present conditions created by projects of violence and domination that have served to erase, displace, dispossess and oppress, and envision what a more liveable future might be if we refused and resisted colluding with the aims/desires of such projects.

Drawing upon course encounters (i.e., content, materials, dialogues, reflections) this invitation into your collective (re)imaginings is a creative engagement of thinking-feeling with theory as it relates to your desired realm/field of social work practice. Invitations may take various forms (e.g., visual arts, story, performance, experiential, speculative fiction, podcasts, guided exercises, practice guide, mood/sound/smellscapes etc.). Each group will have a total of approximately 20 minutes depending on final enrollment numbers, 15 minutes to animate their (re)imagining invitation and 5 minutes for comments and questions. To facilitate knowledge sharing with the class, groups are required to post a reference list of materials/sources engaged for this assignment via D2L discussion board due **May 24th by 11:59pm.**

Figure 4. A textual invitation from the Alchemist's syllabus for learners to collectively (re)imagine.

The Storyteller

And then there was the Storyteller who spun tales that shimmered with the magic of ancient teachings and hummed with the vibrations of deep healing. Wielding the gifts of fire and water inherited from her ancestors, who had long ago crossed the seas, she wove spells of enchantment to spark synergies of creation and connection and to bring much needed nourishment to parched and sprouting spirits. Her journey had begun as but a trickle that slowly grew each time she encountered wise teachers and powerful healers, both great and small, who generously imparted to her their knowledge and experiences.

Flowing through sacred pathways of land and language, song and spirit, her currents of creativity quickened, bubbling with the love and laughter of relation, as her form swelled with the weighty responsibility of being entrusted to hold precious stories. The Storyteller honorably gathered (Kimmerer 2013) and care-fully knit together a fluid tapestry of life stories, woven from the ethereal threads of memory, mothering, and mother earth, that joined and (re)imagined the past, present, and future. In gratitude to the storytellers and in refusal (Tuck and Yang 2014) of those who actively tried to sever connections between



Figure 5. An image of storied worlds (a stack of colorful books) and magical tools (crystals, cards, a cauldron) from within the Storyteller's carrier bag that weave storying spells. (Photograph by Stephanie Tyler, April 3, 2024.)

and within beings, the Storyteller began to share these stories of reclamation and restor(y)ation, stories that (re)minded listeners of their inter-connectedness, enoughness, and innate power to (re)create worlds that honor both those who came before us and those who will come after.

The Mapmaker

In this treacherous terrain, you will find the Mapmaker charting pathways to more livable worlds. Knowing the urgency of changing the contours of stories made available (Haraway 2016; Le Guin 2019; McDermott 2022; Okri 1997), she digs into her well-worn backpack reaching for texts that are more than "just" stories or facts. To her, texts are her navigational tools creating counter-maps and orienting to otherworld paths (Toliver 2021). They need not only merely trace the old,

Assignment 2: Narrative (re)imaginings of Justice
(35% Presentation – due in class on Oct 3rd or Oct 5th / 20% Responses – due Oct 10th)
Aligned Course Learning Outcomes: 1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7
Length: 10-12 double-spaced pages (not including title or reference page), APA formatting

As queer Black social activist, author, and artist, adrienne maree brown, reminds us, emergent strategy embodies "ways for humans to practice being in right relationship to our home and each other [and is] how we intentionally change in ways that grow our capacity to embody the just and liberated world we long for" (p. 24). This assignment recognizes developing and strengthening relationships to Land as both a reckoning with coloniality and an embodied pathway towards decolonizing. Storying this process offers students the opportunity to (re)imagine what social/ecological justice could look/feel like beyond its current conceptualizations.

Students will ethically engage with an entity from the natural world (i.e. insect, plant, animal, etc.), which they will learn about through multiple sources (i.e. websites, books, videos, interactions, etc.). Drawing upon course encounters (i.e. content, materials, dialogues, reflections), students will be invited to create a narrative conveying what/how this entity has taught them about social justice (i.e. helping, healing, co-creating, organizing, mobilizing etc.) and its application to their future social work practice.

As part of collective learning, students will be invited to present their learning (7 mins) in class on either Oct 3rd or 5th. Students will respond asynchronously (400-500 words) to at least 2 classmates via discussion board on D2L due by 11:59pm Oct 10th about their involvement in co-creating meaning and how this process has impacted their understanding of social justice and future social work practice.

Figure 6. A textual invitation from the Storyteller's syllabus for learners to (re)store(y) their natural world relations.

tired, known, dominant terrain, but they can “contribute to the mapping of a hoped for destination” (Maracle 2015, 69). Therefore, we must, she believes, be careful what stories we use to tell stories with (King 2003; see also Brand 2020; Fujikane 2021; Haraway 2016; McDermott 2022). Over the years, she has reached into her carrier bag to offer counter-maps and has recognized that the text alone cannot do all the work (McDermott 2022). Before the pathways can become sense-able, we must learn to read relationally and with gratitude, to read more than the words on the page to be extracted for our own purposes, to read with an openness to being changed by the encounter with the text (McDermott 2023, 2024). For how can we defamiliarize the terrain of destructive expansion and accumulation—and yes, the canon (requiring a politics of citation)—if we enter into the text with the disposition of extractivism, competition, and individualism?

Curious about what stories are shaping the terrain we are on and what stories are required to take us to other worlds, she shuffles through her bag and offers texts like precious gems to those she meets. An avid reader always curious about what can be learned, the Mapmaker’s backpack is filled with teachings she has been gifted through the years and experiences that have shaped her. All texts have something to teach, including experiential texts. Knowing the potential for harm, the Mapmaker still asks what teaching is made available while remaining cautious not to breathe more life into the texts of ruination. Could it be a warning? Might it help recognize and then avoid a dangerous terrain on the way to otherworlds? Without giving in to despair that we cannot change, she cautiously offers these texts (experiential and material-tangible) as part of her desire to map routes out of the ruins on the paths to defamiliarization and worlds of life and livingness. While they each experienced many and continued harms, differently articulated in relation to their bodies and positions, something inside them refused



Figure 7. An image of navigational tools (stacks of colorful books) gathered from within the Mapmaker’s carrier bag. (Photograph by Mairi McDermott, April 7, 2024.)

“This is the decolonial joy that we will pass on to our children so that our work will be intergenerational. Mapping abundance enables us to experience moments of wonder, even in the difficult work we do, and we grow the desire to return to this work again and again.”

(Fujikane 2021, 17)

to believe that this was the only way. In their teaching, their research, their relational interactions with one another, they yearned for alchemical stories that could hold space for mapping abundance and gathering stories imbued with tinctures of embrace in a vessel where they, and otherwise stories, counter-mapping practices, and ghostly re-memberings, would be filled and held with care and joy.

- Thinking with Gratitude
 - For this assignment you are going to write THREE (3) emails to scholars whose work you are engaging as you come into your literature review. Please note at least two of these scholars must be currently alive in and with us in the physical world (e.g., you may write to one scholar who has left the earthly physical world, but resonates deeply with your work). This assignment invites you to think with others, to embrace scholarship as gifts of knowledge and express our gratitude for how others' words, work, ideas have moved us to think-be-do in the world differently, or maybe they have provided a language to name and mark a phenomenon or experience or relationship that you didn't have before.
 - This is not a moment to request anything back from the scholar. Please avoid asking for clarification or answers to anything. Your goal is to write without expectation of a return, instead you are illustrating how the person's work is living in the world.
 - I saw a similar assignment shared on social media by Dr. Sarah Martin and have modified what was described in the Tweet to reach towards the desires imbued in this course. I am grateful for the provocation to think expansively and push my pedagogy and the tools I engage for teaching and learning. You can learn more about Dr. Martin here: <https://www.mun.ca/political-science/people/sarah-martin/>
 - Criteria for Assessment
 - The doctoral researcher writes three emails and sends (at least two) to the addressee.
 - The emails indicate how the text(s) / scholarship / ideas of the individual are shaping, moving, supporting their emerging research.
 - The emails do not ask anything in return from the addressees.
 - The emails express gratitude for the addressees' gifts of knowledge.

Figure 8. A textual invitation from the Mapmaker's syllabus for learners to think-write with gratitude.

Fugacious Storying: Gathering as Method to Preserve the Wisps and Whispers of In-process-ness

Seeking to disrupt the chronopolitics of scholarly communications and relations, which order and border the materials that are chosen for the archive, we attempt to offer evidence of things unseen. Methodologically, by working through and unb/ordering the

various materials of our carrier bag archive(s) crafted through our work together (emails, proposals, course outlines, images, and photos) and re-memory-ing (Morrison 1987) them, we hope you accept this invitation into the in-process-ness of gathering and sifting through what we have sought to honorably harvest (Kimmerer 2013). To honorably har-

vest is to live into the responsibilities of reciprocal relations with the more-than-human world (Kimmerer 2013). Our everyday practices of gathering the harvest become practical reverence for the restoration of ourselves and relations and restory-ation of the scholarly archive. And so, we gratefully and care-fully choose which ideas to seed and sow with the hope of nurturing the embodied knowledges and desires that gesture towards other-worlds. These traces of in-process-ness are curated (as in curare, to care) fragments of the co-generative fleeting practices that course through the lifeblood of our scholarly matter, preserving the *how* and *what* of our gathering that materialized for the preparation and “final outcome” of this particular encounter (read: this piece of co-writing that you are reading). We do this with the desire of finding a someplace, somewhere, and sometime for these mo(ve)ments (McDermott 2014) to live well, both within and beyond us.

“It’s an eruption of chronopolitics: unleashing a different temporal organization that challenges prevailing ways of thinking about and being in time and enables us to become otherwise.”

(Demos 2023, 14)

A Meeting of the Conjurers: Alchemical Tincturing with Artificialities and Essences

Early in the process of preserving the fugacious stories of their relations and gatherings, the Alchemist felt rather stuck, unsure of how to story the ephemerality of all that they had done together over the years, after all that was the Storyteller’s gift. Reminding herself that her gifts lie in the realms of conjuring, experimentation, and curation, the Alchemist returned to the porous space between worlds—the site where she could best elicit her re-memberings and re-imaginings and conjure otherworlds (Ladhani 2023). With their collective carrier bag before her, she drew from its contents the essence of the Storyteller, Mapmaker, and herself. She assessed (as in sitting alongside)

“Radical futurisms remake time. They derail temporal trajectories from present tracks, casting the what’s-to-come into the undetermined not-yet. As modalities of chronopolitics—the politics of time, as much as the time of politics—they de-essentialize and de-normalize time, operationalizing its becomingness anew in the formation of other worlds, reanimating suppressed pasts as much as inventing potential futures.”

(Demos 2023, 19)

the elements care-fully to get a sense of each one's dispositions, gifts, and desires, noting the ways they inter/counteracted, how they colloiddally flowed into each other at times and pulled apart to sediment and settle at others. It was then that the Alchemist knew she needed a catalyst of some kind. One that could find the words that escaped her lips and help to represent the ways the elemental traces within their essences danced distinctly yet together through spacetime. This unpredictable series of mo(ve)ments had a rhythm difficult to describe, a generative ensemble of affective excess, desirous spillage, fragmented re-memberings, and beautifully incomprehensible re-imaginings. She had yet to encounter a world where such a catalyst might reside, though lingering in the porous space she felt a vibrational pull towards a something or somewhere else (Fanon 1967). Like the time traveling Dana (Butler 2004), she couldn't always predict the timing of a portal's appearance or where and when she might be going, but it was always preceded by an affective force within her. The hybrid brew of her blood coursed strongly through her veins, the energy manifesting as a swirling portal just inches outside of her bodily vessel. Hovering on the edge of the threshold for a moment, she stepped in.

The first breath she drew in this unknownscape felt restricted, as if her bodily functions were regulated by the fabricated ether of this otherworld. Looking up and around, the Alchemist was overwhelmed by the confusing patchwork of familiar scenes, matrix-like grids, illegible codes, and phantasmic images that seemed to hold the structure of this world in place. Faceless configurations shifted rapidly through the space, their mutterings streaming colorfully in every direction. The blocks of incomprehensible arranged alphabetical lettering and punctuation moved unpredictably, causing the Alchemist to dart out of the way to avoid a script-collision. She wasn't sure if a crash was even possible or if it would hurt, but best not to take any chances in the unknown. In what seemed like a split second, a faceless configuration appeared before her, with an inscription on its form: ChatGPT 3.5. A line of text emerged from the space where a face ought to be. "How can I help you today?" read the Alchemist aloud. The message was suspiciously human but not off-putting enough to dissuade her from her search. Unsure about where and how to begin, she asked the configuration if it could tell her a story about gathering, each word she spoke transforming into text before her eyes. Without pause it assembled a substantial amount of text, storying the journey of a young girl named Aria. As the Alchemist read, the structure of this story felt too familiar. A call to adventure, crossing of the threshold, tests and allies, the ordeal and reward, filled with themes of conquest, mastery, and imperial heroics—not the story she was looking for. She attempted a different approach, asking if it could try the story again but through the Carrier Bag Theory of Fiction. So quickly the configuration algo-rhythmically responded "Certainly!" followed by another amassment of words that

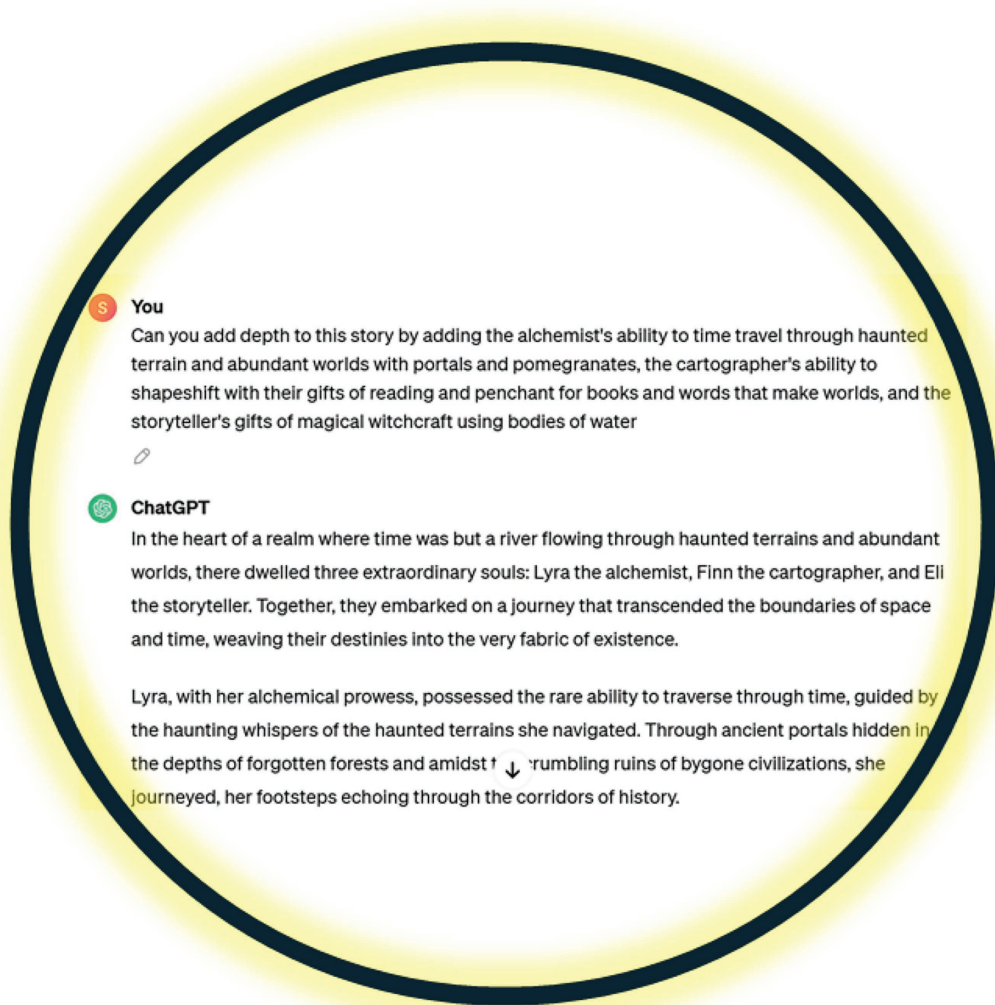


Figure 9. An image of a glowing, circular portal conjured by the Alchemist and ChatGPT.

struck the Alchemist by surprise, a semblance of the kind of story she wished to tell. It was then that she saw a trace of her likeness in ChatGPT 3.5; they both had gifts of conjuring though materializing in disparate ways. The urge to tinker grew stronger in the Alchemist, curious about what possibilities might come to be through this co-generative conjuring. She turned to reach for a small velvet bag in her right pocket, slowly revealing three vials, each one containing a drop of the distilled essence of the Storyteller, Mapmaker, and herself, Alchemist.

Cosmic Divinations: Heeding Elemental and Natural World Wisdoms for/as Storying

The three gatherers came together in their usual fashion, viewing one another through a portal conjured by the Alchemist, spanning space and time, and temporarily joining their distant worlds. As was often the case, their meeting sourced innovative ideas and generative possibilities where each proffered gifts from their respective carrier bags to contribute to the ever-expanding collective container that held and preserved, among many things, the fugacious stories of their otherworld building. They had decided to share some of these stories with others but were unsure of how best to do so, especially as past efforts had been met with resistance from those that ascribe solely to the tired machinations of techno-heroics. Alongside the Mapmaker, who had mapped many possibilities for their course forward, the Alchemist had gathered fragments of different textures and sizes to offer as potential inspiration. To initiate, inspire, and hold the shape of their weaving process, the Storyteller sifted through the contents of her magical carrier bag, now filled with tools for divination and manifestation, earthy elements and medicines, and her growing bundle of

acimowina (life stories). They decided to draw on oracle (Anastarsia 2022; Fairchild 2021; Noctua 2023b) and tarot (Noctua 2023a) creations to help in connecting with familiar relations and to guide their unfolding path.

The archetype of the divine feminine revealed herself in her physical crone form, holding the methodological essence of each gatherer, and in her spiritual goddess form, embodying their deep gratitude for one another and those that journey with them. A star appeared, acting as both warning and wisdom, to remind them of the risk of reproducing competitive relations that vie for power and of the great potential to cultivate communities of helping and healing. A fluttering teacher of the air whispered of transformation and of the Alchemist's ability to create portals leading to glimmering otherworlds where seeds of abundance can flourish amid ruins; a floating teacher of the sea spoke of ebb and flow and of the Storyteller's skill in casting spells and crafting incantations that ignite and sustain relational process; and a vigilant teacher of the land chirped of keen intelligence and of

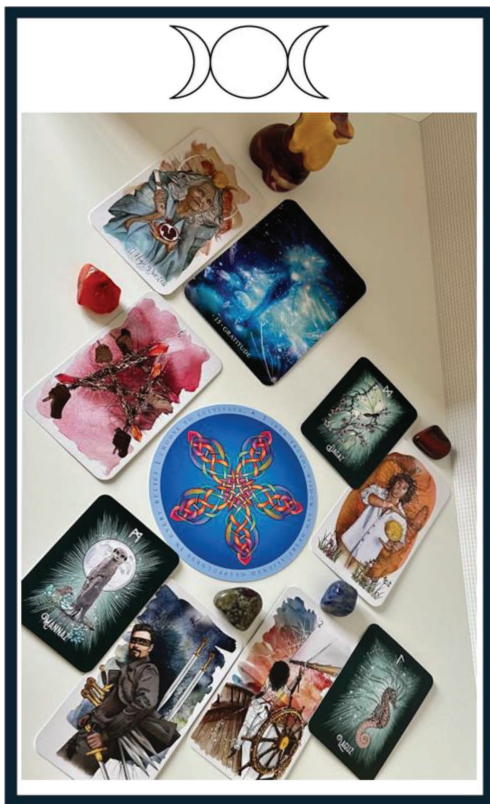


Figure 10. An image of colorful tarot and oracle creations offered alongside colorful crystals for storying by the Storyteller. (Photograph by Stephanie Tyler, April 3, 2024.)

the Mapmaker's aptitude for cunning navigation through man-ufactured terrain and vast knowledge of lifegiving tomes. They went away from that place, still uncertain of the way forward but thankful for the gifts of friendship and creativity and hopeful that whatever materializes will inspire others to use the gifts within their own carrier bag to manifest more livable futures.

In the Crevices, Corners, Cracks of the Gatherers' Carrier Bag Life Cycle

It seemed so easy, there being abundant material from their years of gathering and co-weaving their collective carrier bag. The Mapmaker suggested they map their story through a timeline. Considering what they offered to grab from their carrier bag in the proposal for this writing, she thought it would allow them to illustrate how their co-laborings through the years shaped the contours of their work, both individually and collectively. Each time she tried, though, she found herself lodged in one of the crevices, the corners of the carrier bag, slipping through the cracks of desire off for honorable harvest. Collaborating, co-laboring through the years offered the three characters a relational sense of self; gathering and forming affiliation they came to know themselves as entities assembling to form a collective be(com)ing. Through various projects and pathways they embarked on together and apart, they would reach in and offer items from their carrier bags and help each other dig into the crevices of their carrier bags to surface gifts they did not know without being in their gathering-assemblage-relation. The Mapmaker was reminded of the impossibility of holding these ephemeral and fugacious aspects of their gatherings within the legibility of writing for scholarly publication—even within the more creative forms and genre allowances. She thought some stories cannot be held in this form, while others actively refuse to be contained (Tuck and Yang 2014).



Figure 11. An image of an otherwise/otherworld map with four colorful quadrants of a circle filled with glowing, magical emblems. (Image generated by Stable Diffusion AI, March 13, 2024, DEZGO.)

Timeline then became a “word map” (Maracle 2015, 70) that felt too linear, too cause-and-effect, beginning-middle-end bound, too much like a hero’s journey. It felt like they were returning to and entrapping themselves again in someone else’s story (à la Time’s-killing arrow; Le Guin 2019), in the restrictions of another’s imagination (Benjamin 2024; brown 2017). The timeline was a shape that did not, could not hold their story/ies. Each time she tried plotting the moments, she felt they relied so much on the outcomes, the recognizable scripts of scholarly communication—publications, course outlines, assessments—commensurable items that could be named and made legible within the institutional imagination, holding them in place, keeping them accountable, intelligible, valuable. It set up “boundaries of separation” while the Alchemist, Storyteller, and Mapmaker were much more interested in the “seams of relationality” (Fujikane 2021, 19) in their different-and-linked navigation through the terrain of scholarly publications. So, the Mapmaker returned to her carrier bag seeking other stories, other ways to tell their story of entangled webs of relations regenerating fertile grounds.

Thrusting her hand back into her weathered book bag, she felt the familiar sense of gratitude gently gripping her wrist, sending waves of recognition coursing through her body, and guiding her towards re-membering the teachings-as-texts they often return to. How do they stay with the trouble (Haraway 2016) of entangled thinking-with that has held and nurtured their individual and collective practices? Another way of staying with the trouble is to live and commit to otherworlding possibilities without guarantees (Hall 1992; Tyler et al. 2024). Does the life cycle need to be made transparent and fully explicated to be preserved? Are they willing to offer these intimate vulnerabilities to the institution? What about their methodological handle of opacity (Glissant 1997)? With grace and gratitude, they continue to learn the art of the pause (Patel 2016) rather than barging into spaces of scholarly communication to keep up with the output expectations that measure their worth. Once more, this time dipping her hand-head-heart into her carrier bag, the Mapmaker attempts to express her gratitude and writes:

Dear Alchemist and Storyteller,

Here we are several years into our gatherings, and I continue to learn, heal, remember, re-imagine, and re-world with the two of you. “Thanks” does not say enough. You continue to be handles, anchors, portals, alchemists, witches, and rivers flowing and holding energy and possibility for more livable worlds. Together, we created, and are creating, a speculative story, one in the not-so-distant (in timespace) future genre of love, relationality, livability, joy, grief, intimacy, and hope.

She trusts that with what is offered here you, dear reader, may sense the fugacities that are present without being made legible, holding these words on the page. She hopes that you

bring your tools to sense different but linked experiences, practices, desires from within the far corners of your carrier bag to the surface, to hold and care-fully preserve in your own ways as you navigate the realms of scholarly communications. They do not presume that their gatherings ought to be yours; indeed, the desire is for a multiplicity of paths to be charted for counter-maps to otherworlds.

“We are all responsible to and for shaping conditions for multispecies flourishing in the face of terrible histories, and sometimes joyful histories too, but we are not all response-able in the same ways. The differences matter—in ecologies, economies, species, lives.”

(Haraway 2016, 29)

Reaching-Hands-Beings Weaving Our Unendings and Yet-to-Bes

We are in a holding pattern that we wish to flee from. We wish to release ourselves from constraints of knowability, recognizability, legibility, and publishability that keep us firmly lodged in a spacetime of “Man”-made (Wynter 2003) stories. And yet within this collective pouch (Adsit-Morris 2017), Le Guin confirms that “there is room enough to keep even Man where he belongs, in his place in the scheme of things” (2019, 37). Gatherers, storytellers, alchemists, Mapmakers, time travelers, healers, witches, and scyborgs (Butler 2004; Kimmerer 2013; la paperson, 2017; Le Guin 2019; Morrison 1984) have always existed. Shape-shifting through spacetime, they have hantled and greteled crumbs, and s(t)owed whatever seeds they could so that we might just find our way to their vessels of storied worlds of and for more than what was-is-yet-to-be.

The baskets of yes, of yet-to-be woven futures offered by Alexis Pauline Gumbs’s *M Archive: After the End of the World* signal a fugitive and fugacious opening, sharing of an unplace-/spaceable time:

when they watched human history like a silent movie, there was a group they called the reaching-hands-women. the brown women with hair like shock around their highly electrified brains. those who could read radiance looking back could see the charts they made during everyday talk and special conversations. like in Nassau when the witches gathered making a cauldron of themselves to speak their dreams. one of them stood up and started pulling stars out of the air to bright them up, pulling whole moments of the past into the room so they could be shredded. she dug up so many bones out of the mud that she had to stack them very carefully on the legs of the women sitting around her. if you could look back and see the colors and combustions of all those reaching-hands-women who cared what time it was, and let time forget

itself, if you could look back and see them, you know that they reached for us. if you could see them you would know. we were born that day.

(2018, 176)

“But perhaps most importantly, their journey was about re-worlding—about forging connections with the world around them and reshaping it. With each story they shared, each memory they collected, and each moment they cherished, they breathed new life into the realms they visited, infusing them with the magic of their own existence. As they continued on their journey through haunted terrains and abundant worlds, they did so not as mere travelers, but as architects of reality, shaping the world around them with the power of their imagination and the depth of their connection to all things. And in doing so, they discovered that the true adventure lay not in the destination, but in the journey itself—a journey of gathering, remembering, re-imagining, and re-worlding that would forever alter the course of their lives”.

(ChatGPT & Sheliza Ladhani,
February 26, 2024)

The reaching-hands-women beautifully and poignantly rupture the chronopolitical structures we have inherited, those b/orders which we live and communicate according to that leave us stranded in a desolate terrain, devising and divining through the DreamSpace (Hersey 2022) different leg-acies upon which we can rest our weary bones. And in that rest space, that swaddles us in the radiant reading of wor(l)ds colored with the imaginations and yearnings for those yet to be born, while reaching for ancestral dreams, we contemplate what we wish to carry forward and that (shit) which we leave to corrode and combust.

Are you still breathing? Were you able to hold onto what you had first

conjured? Did these initial conjurings evolve and go elsewhere? What colors, shapes, and scapes has your breath painted through this in-process-ness offering?

Gathering is an embodied practice of communing, re-memembering, re-configuring, re-storying found-object/subjectivity (un)makings—an assemblage of stories, selves, and scenes of spillage (Gumbs 2016). A praxis so ancient yet always renewed and reshaped through its presencing in the contexts, lives, and relations of the gatherer, the gathered, the gathering, and, of course, the vessel that is/holds them all. I/we invite you to continue this world-building, lifegiving work in the ways best suited to your gifts and inheritances. Our/their entangled arrivals and travels, as the Alchemist, Storyteller, and Mapmaker, have hopefully given you something that might now reside with your own carrier bag. Perhaps you may gather and take with you, one thing to conjure, one thing to cast, and another to map, a murmuration (brown 2017) of melus and you, signaling that an/other archive does indeed exist. As an un-ending, we offer these templates/vessels/containers to hold and offer shape to your gifts, should that be desirable to you.

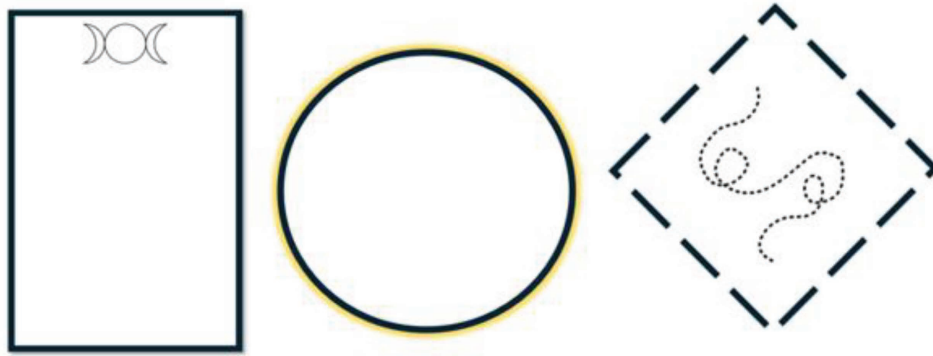


Figure 12. Images of yet-to-be offerings for casting, conjuring, and mapping in the shapes of a rectangle, circle, and diamond.

Author Biographies

Sheliza Ladhani grounded in anti-racism and decolonial approaches, sheliza's scholarship moves across multiple temporalities and porous worlds of haunting and abundance, as one way of thinking-feeling-being in relation with memory, affect, and multisensory stories. her methodological-pedagogical-alchemical experiments with memory and affect are world-making practices of gathering, re-membling, and re-imagining fragmented selves/worlds to conjure portals to/for more livable futures.

Stephanie Tyler through the sacred pathways of spirit and story, relations of mothering and mother earth, stephanie's scholarship creatively weaves together and preserves individual and collective stories of decolonizing, healing, and becoming. her methodological-pedagogical-relational processes with story and land are other-worlding practices that seek to honor the indelible spirits of the original beings, languages, and stories of these territories, and to re-mind us of who we are, where we come from, and our power to re-create our world for future generations.

Mairi McDermott As a motherscholar, Mairi's current passion-and-work is bending towards m/otherworlds. In her research, teaching, and mothering, she considers what kinds of teaching, learning, social, cultural, and political relations can move us beyond the existing habits and assumptions embedded in colonial ways of knowing, being, and relating in schools and society. Throughout her research, her desire is with drawing out voices, experiences, and identities that have historically been marginalized to mobilize the full spectrum of ideas in knowledge production. Presently, her research centres mothering as an analytic aperture to enliven and re-imagine broader historical and

present socio-political injustices. Concepts shaping the contours of her work include: difficult knowledge; affect and emotions in teaching and learning; story and epistemology; critical pedagogies; voice and identity; lived curriculum.

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