Replaying the Past: Queer Canadian Documentary as Counter-Archive

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ABSTRACT

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Archives have traditionally privileged hegemonic and normative histories, often excluding marginalized people and their memories. Emerging after the archival turn of the 1990s, "counter-archival" scholarship appeared in the early 2010s, to expand definitions of "archive" to include a more diverse body of materials and historiographical methods. These alternative processes and repositories, known as a counter-archive, can be a community archival collection, an oral history practice, a curated exhibition, an archival methodology that expresses a non-dominant sensibility, artistic practice, or more. A counter-archive typically speaks to, preserves, or represents non-dominant memories from queer, racialized, diasporic, differently abled, or Indigenous peoples, whose subjectivities may often intersect or overlap. In this thesis, I consider queer Canadian documentary film as a counter-archive, one which is a process to preserve subjective and affective memory, but also as a repository, a living collection which replays these memories. I explore how queer counter-archives use queer cinematic aesthetics, archival artefacts, talking head interviews, voiceover narration and re-enactments to preserve and replay memories of queer subjects who have resisted the pull of heteronormativity, but also how creative preservation practices express the affect, relationality, and subjectivity of queer sensibility. I analyze two queer Canadian documentaries, Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives (Dir. Lynne Fernie Aerlynn Weissman, 1992) and Sea in the Blood (Dir. Richard Fung, 2000). Using Muñoz's queer utopia framework, I explore how counter-archives replay memory to produce queer utopias, visions of a world determined by queer sensibility, a way-finder towards a place charted by self-determined subjectivity.

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Introduction

> *Forbidden Love* presents the stories of lesbians whose desire for community led them on a dangerous search for the few public beer parlours that would tolerate openly "queer" women in the 1950s and 60s. It is not intended to be a "survey" or overview of history of lesbians in Canada; indeed, most lesbians were forced to live intensely private lives, often isolated from each other. This film, like all lesbian and gay histories, is meant to contribute to another fragment, another telling, as we break the silence of our lives.
>
> – *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (Dir. Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman, 1992)

For as long as I can remember, I have been fascinated with memory – partly due to my fascination with how I remember things. My short-term memory is lousy at best. I forgot the name when it was introduced and cannot tell you where I just placed my pen. Yet, when it comes to the past, that is something I can replay. If you were to ask where I was on a given date, I could, without looking at a calendar, tell you who I was with, where I was, how I felt, and even what I ate. What I've described is my experiential memory. Admittedly, my experiential memory is an uncanny gift, and it has become a central record of family events and a contribution to the family archive. These memories form oral histories recounting events and experiences or can be used to offer associations with family artefacts. Why do I remember a range of idiosyncratic events? How are they significant to an archive?

Memory is arguably a universal experience, yet specific in how it responds to one's subjectivity. We all have associations with childhood books, songs, and parks where we had our first kiss. We remember the things we shouldn't, like laughing at a funeral, but also forget traumatic events. Two people can have divergent accounts of the same event. We have memories associated with objects, so we hold on to and collect them. I am a hoarder; I hold on to everything. When I was 14, my hobby was film photography. Using expired film found in a

basement fridge, I photographed my friends, family, and dog, and it became an amateur act of documentation, a creative archiving of my daily life. One afternoon, I catalogued my negatives and dedicated a bookshelf to house their archive. These photographs are visualized memories, a record of life seen through my lens. As a gay man, are these all "gay" memories – are they "queer"?

In this thesis, I explore queer memory, which I position as something rooted in subjectivity and relationality that is detached from normative structures and something which is a window fueled by queer possibility. Although this thesis does not examine my queer memory, it is driven by my lifelong fascination with queer memory and its affective and emotional entanglements. My earliest queer memory was that of my uncle Smee, whom I only knew briefly before his tragic passing from complications from AIDS in 2002, I was five years old. He was cheerful, generous, well-traveled, engaged in his community and beloved by our family. I remember his small Toronto funeral at our synagogue and that he had a living wake in Vancouver, which I could not attend. I recall the day my parents explained his death, my first experience with grief, and the attempts I made to make sense of this loss. My earliest queer memory, although marked by tragedy, was not solely engendered by a feeling of loss – unlike how movies represent it. As a teenager, I was curious to see visions of queer life. I began to watch queer films, specifically ones about the gay male experience, as that was what was most readily available online. I watched *Weekend* (Dir. Andrew Haigh, 2012), *Brokeback Mountain* (Dir Ang Lee, 2002), and *Milk* (Gus Van Saint, 2008), to name a few. My first foray into queer media was through viewing fiction films which replayed queer memory and ones where queer loss was the overarching affect. Although I related to these films, I was troubled by the limitations of how they represent queer experience and memory, especially as one marked by

tragedy. From my own experience, queer memory felt like something in between, something which recalls feelings of joy, happiness, and loss. These lifelong curiosities and fascinations with personal memory, archival artefacts, and film as a reflection of memory and social history have been the catalyst to this project, a thesis that positions queer Canadian documentaries as a counter-archive.

This thesis examines how queer Canadian documentaries can be both a process and an archival repository that preserves experiential and affective queer memory. I discuss how queer remembering can challenge heteronormativity and other forms of hegemony that attempt to shape queer life. In so doing, I consider how queer counter-archives might produce a queer archival Utopia – a vision of a world shaped by queer sensibility. Emulating Sara Ahmed's exploration of queer joy as political (Ahmed, 106), I explore the political potential of a range of queer affect, one which unsettles binaries and rigidity of memory, subjectivity, and social history. To do so, I explore counter-archival films: *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (Fernie and Weissman, 1992) and *Sea in the Blood* (Richard Fung, 2000). Through my examination of these counter-archival documentaries, I consider how personal queer memory, often ones of everyday life, are preserved in personal archival artefacts such as home movies or photographs, as well as oral histories transmitted through interview or voiceover narration and re-enactment, are collected, and placed inside the mise-en-scene of these films to produce queer world-building. Here I argue that these counter-archival documentary films create archival utopias, which, as defined by Muñoz, are aesthetic and political practices that produce alternate visions of a world shaped by queer sensibilities (Muñoz, 189). In this thesis, the sensibilities I speak of are defined by joy, relationality, alliance, and emotional affect that seek to make sense of and challenge hegemony.

I consider a queer counter-archive as a vision into a world of queer memory, determined by queer frameworks to depict and resist any form of heteronormativity and hegemony. Although it is difficult to decide how all forms of hegemony influence queer subjectivity and experience, I consider how some public policies, media, and archival institutions in Canada have influenced or produced hegemonic and heteronormative national queer identity. I argue that the queer counter-archive responds to these social conditions to provide a queer worldview based on the subject or filmmakers' personal experience. In other words, I consider how queer memory is mobilized through a cinematic artistic practice to challenge the heteronormative phenomenon of homo-assimilation and to preserve queer memory. The counter-archival documentary films which I analyze visualize memory through a queer lens, a lens which rejects institutional practices, singular historical narratives, and fixed identities to embrace experience, collectivity, intersectionality, and multiplicity regarding queer memory and subjectivity. This thesis argues that counter-archiva is a form of queer world-building—a practice of creating a window, or a utopia, into queer possibility through memory, in a way that rejects the logic of normativity.

Defining Counter-Archive

A counter-archive is an archive without an institution. Defined variously as a creative process (Kashmere, 1), curatorial process (Giannachi, 143), community repository or film (Amad, 120), performance (Taylor, 197), or video or media work (Barron 102), counter-archive challenges official records and historical narratives, instead activating personal or communal memories to preserve often neglected documents, artefacts, embodied, and collective memories. In a traditional sense, archives are physical and institutional repositories that house original documents and artefacts intended to maintain dominant understandings of heritage, history, and memory (Membe, 19). The process of archiving selects said documents, orders, sorts, and

records them to be put in boxes stacked on shelves and preserved for future generations. Although viewed by many as "neutral" historical repositories, some such institutions, such as the National Archives and Library of Canada, are mobilized to preserve national heritage with the express purpose of defining collective memory (LAC, 2022), one which participates in settler colonial nation-building projects. This leads us to ask: does this process create a dominant or hegemonic national narrative? If so, then whose histories and memories are relegated to the margins? Are there alternate archives and processes that challenge hegemonic memory and bring counter-histories into the fold?

Since the archival turn of the 1990s, artists, scholars, and community archivists have sought agency in the archives. Using archival documents, feminist and queer practitioners produced exhibitions and self-published printed matter (Eichhorn, 2), which challenged dominant histories and archival narratives (Simon, 102). Counter-archive, a term which first emerged during the 2010s, expanded upon the archival turn (Kashmere, 2010 and Amad, 2010) to include film (Amad, 21, 109), video, digital media, studio practices such as photography (Kashmere, 1), digital media, as well as performance (Taylor, 202, 210) and even metaphorical archives, such as the body (Singh, 23). In the academy, counter-archival studies emerged to unearth, excavate, and understand contemporary and historical counter-archival practices, questioning the absence and presence of certain voices and communities in historical records.

The counter-archive privileges personal and communal memory and the latter's entanglements with embodied forms such as documents or artefacts, which serve as records of non-dominant history. Counter-archives are also community repositories run by members of a specific community, such as the ArQuives in Toronto or Archives gai du Quebec in Montréal. Creating artistic works and processes outside of traditional archives, counter-archive sometimes

works with a typical archive; when it does, its aims are subversive. It takes objects off shelves, out of their boxes and into the public realm. In the case of counter-archival documentary — the focus of this thesis — memory is brought to life and visualized through found footage, home movies, photographs, artefacts, re-enactments, talking head interviews and voiceover narration, which transmit oral history. The counter-archival documentaries, *Forbidden Love: the Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (Dir. Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman, 1992) and *Sea in the Blood* (Dir. Richard Fung, 2000), which I will analyzed throughout this thesis, use editing to order, sort, store and record the archival artefacts and oral histories, creating an archival experience (Baron, 103). The elements of a counter-archival documentary's mise-en-scene often produce counter-archival aesthetics, something I analyze throughout this thesis and define in my next chapter. Yet I draw attention to this lineage to define counter-archival documentary film as a process that uses film and archival aesthetics, creating repositories to bring memory to life and visualizing memory inside a film's mise-en-scene.

When speaking about archives, I do not mean the bricks-and-mortar memory institutions such as the Library and National Archives of Canada, which stockpile miles of files and are operated and funded by governments to preserve documents for nation-building projects (Membe, 23). These memory institutions enact necessary processes that take stock of the past to make sense of the present and shape the future. However, as traditional archival institutions represent national interests, they are inevitably entangled with national projects and hegemony. I am interested in archives that privilege non-dominant histories, repositories, and processes centred on subjectivity, something a traditional archive cannot do (Foote, 379). Archival subjectivity is something Diana Taylor probes in her study of archival repertoire, which explores performance to produce "networks of social memory" (Taylor, 195). Meanwhile, Paula Amad's

work examines the film's archival properties (Amad, 125), positioning it as an alternative memory-making process and repository. Further, Gabriella Giannachi examines curatorial and creative practices that document archival practices (Giannchi, 146) and defines these as collections practices. These scholars explore how counter-archival processes and repositories use creative practice to centre subjectivity and challenge hegemony. In the case of a counter-archival documentary film, I suggest it achieves this through a marriage of form and content.

In the case of this project, counter-archive uses methodologies which privilege non-hegemonic collection practices to recount personal and communal histories to challenge the assertion that queer, gender, racial and diasporic identities are fixed and stable. Stuart Hall, who rejected the idea of cultural identity as a firm category, views "identity as a 'production' which is never complete, always in process" (Hall, 392). I consider how a counter-archival documentary film draws attention to social identities' fluidity, which, with regards to queer identity, Muñoz describes the term queer as "not here" but instead as a horizon full of potentiality (Muñoz, 1). By this, Muñoz means that because queer subjectivity often adheres and assimilates to heteronormative ideologies, queer potentiality has yet to be fully realized. Charles. E Morris believes that state hegemony produces a homo-assimilation, thus suggesting that queer is an identity that challenges its "normalization" (Morris, 75). In this thesis, I examine how identity challenges state hegemony and other forms of hegemony that attempt to shape queer sensibilities and queer life.

I do not suggest that the films examined here document archival practices, nor that they are archival institutions, but that they constitute a kind of filmmaking that is a process and repository that preserves queer memory and unlock its potential as a framework which shapes a queer world, one which is sustained by queer sensibility. In the counter-archival films analyzed

for this thesis, I investigate how these films arrange objects and use re-enactment, voiceover narration, and talking head interviews to transmit queer? I position documentary film as a preservation practice because of the technological potential that both the camera and sound recording device hold to record and process memory, experience, affect, and history and the role that montage plays in sorting, ordering, and preserving these memories to draw connections to both material artefacts and oral histories. As a method that produces archival meaning, montage is essentially an engagement with archival provenance and original order, which the British Archival National Archives notes is a process that constructs meaning between objects and their relations (British National Archives). This definition from a traditional archival institution prioritizes the artefacts, not the human subjectivity associated with them, implying neutrality when handling archival material. However, understanding the filmmaker as an archivist allows us to bring subjectivity to the forefront of the archiving process as a challenge to archival neutrality. This subjective positioning in the archives is a common counter-archival practice:

> The archive is where we bear witness to our encounter with the remains of history. It is not a space of neutrality where the subject is put into parenthesis, rather, it is where the subject takes on the act of remembering and acknowledges the problematics that their own subject positioning entails in the historicization of the present and its narration and documentation as part of a future history. (Giannachi, 143)

This quote is from Gabriella Giannachi's *Archive Everything*. It refers to artistic archives, such as that of the Atlas Group, which used creative mapping to retrace the impacts of the Lebanese Civil War. Giannachi describes the defining factor of these archives as centred in subjectivity, partly due to their non-institutional processes. Here, I draw on Giannachi's framework as I intend

to explore how counter-archival documentary film disrupts archival neutrality through queer subjectivity, queer relationality, and identity.

In the case of *Forbidden Love* and *Sea in the Blood,* I explore how queerness challenges the naturalization or normalization of queer, racialized, gendered, and diasporic identities and any intersection of these experiences. I consider how counter-archive's process and form question memory as a fixed category destabilize the hegemonic naturalization of queer identity. I examine how a counter-archival film creates an archival utopia which shows queer community, alliance, relationality, and identities' fluidity. I suggest that because queer counter-archival documentary film is both an archival process and repository, it shows memory and social identity in process and depicts a queer utopia – the possibility of a world shaped by queer sensibility. I define queer sensibility as one that is shaped by personal memory, experience, affect, subjectivity, intersectionality, and identity and can be used as a framework to interpret archival artefacts, oral histories, social history, and embodied memory. In a counter-archival documentary film, this queer sensibility is visualized through queer cinematic aesthetics: visual anachronisms, non-linear time, and amateur film aesthetics. A queer sensibility informs queer Canadian counter-archival documentary films to interpret memory and produce aesthetics which challenge hegemonic and normative forms of identity, subjectivity, and memory-making practices.

Socio-political and historical context

I situate my analysis of my two case studies, *Sea in the Blood* and *Forbidden Love,* in the Canadian socio-political context to consider the forms of hegemony these counter-archives respond to. The historical period which I analyze spans from roughly the mid-20th century to the millennium, which was a period of queer mobilization and transformation in many parts of the world, including Canada. Some notable historical examples include the decriminalization of

homosexuality in 1969 and, before that, the emergence of gay and lesbian counter-communities through pulp-fiction novels (Ahmed, 89) and social sites such as bars and cruising spots (Muñoz, 34). Despite the decriminalization of homosexuality in 1969, public homophobia and transphobia remained rampant in Canadian society for many years after. In response to this, queer liberation movements mobilized in the late 1970s and 80s, tackling crises such as HIV/AIDS, the Toronto Bathhouse Raids, and many more. It was events such as these that crystallized into public debates about sexuality and human rights, which continue to influence contemporary queer movements, social policies, and debates organized around ways of remembering in Canadian society[1]. Artistic practices also emerged during this period, such as queer film and media-arts movements of the 1980s and 1990s, specifically the New Queer Cinema movement. Although often associated with American independent queer cinema, B Ruby Rich notes that it officially emerged at the 1991 Toronto International Film Festival (Rich, 16). In Canada, key figures such as Richard Fung, John Greyson, Midi Onodera, and Patricia Rozema all of whom created artistic output which espoused queer sensibilities and challenged heteronormativity and other forms of hegemony.

In this thesis, I consider how *Forbidden Love* and *Sea in the Blood* explores queer memory as a response to this period and as a challenge to heteronormativity and other forms of hegemony. To explore different forms of hegemony, I position heterosexuality as that which upholds normative sexual, racial, gender, and national identities, something which Harris and Holman-Jones note as well (Harris and Holman-Jones, 5). Thus, I understand heteronormativity as an ideology that attempts to influence everyday Canadian life and even cultural institutions,

[1] For further examples of contemporary movements supporting queer rights in Canadian society, see SOGI *Creating SOGI-inclusive education as easy as 1-2-3*. SOGI. *https://www.sogieducation.org/approach*

public policy, and medical discourse. Although I do not produce an analysis of the operations of specific public institutions, I examine how some public policies and institutions have impacted subjects' respective memories, relationships, experiences, and sensibilities in *Forbidden Love* and *Sea in the Blood*. My analysis explores how these policies, institutions and ideologies have subtly impacted or influenced the memories of subjects and the queer community depicted in my case studies. I note that despite policy shifts towards creating a more inclusive and open Canadian society, these policies have often been determined by a liberal ideology. As Devin Beauregard and Johnathan Paquette note, the latter is steeped in "modernist" ideals that centre liberal democracies and their public institutions in a human-rights-based agenda and considers the attainment of human rights for traditionally marginalized people to unify diverse populations **(**Beauregard and Paquette, 73). Although equality and acceptance of those who occupy marginalized spaces in society are necessary, I am aware of the limitations of this ideology, as it often adheres to heteronormative ideologies that promote forms of assimilation and ignores subjectivity. I consider how the limitations of this liberal ideology, which strives for quote "inclusivity", do not address queer sensibility. Thus, in this thesis, I speculate how a counter-archive, which may respond to or reflect aspects of liberal Canadian culture, can nonetheless depart from the latter to present a utopian vision of a world determined by queer sensibility.

During the mid to late 20th century, strategic policy shifts occurred to include non-dominant racial, gender and sexual minorities in society. Some examples include federal and provincial social policies, statutes, and laws such as the local *Human Rights Acts*, *The Federal Multiculturalism Act* **(**Beauregard and Paquette, 76)*,* and the legalization of same-sex marriage. These policies are commonly viewed as cornerstones to Canada's liberal identity, intrinsic to the Nation's identity, which presents Canada as a welcoming, multicultural state on the world stage.

Although there is merit to this identity, in *Canadian Cultural Policy in Transition,* Devin Beauregard and Jonathan Paquette point to the fact that these policies intend to improve the quality of wider Canadian society; however, Beauregard and Paquette note that the dominant ideology that informs these policies is whiteness and heterosexuality, thus upholding hegemonic power structures and replicating normative ideologies **(**Beauregard and Paquette, 72).

Normative, hegemonic ideologies and cultural acts have also influenced the development of Canadian arts, culture, heritage, institutions, and funding bodies. In the 1950s, the Canadian government commissioned the Massey Report to determine how state development of public art institutions could bring arts, culture, and heritage to the forefront of Canadian society **(**Beauregard and Paquette, 65). A central goal of the Massey Report was to support the notion of cultural democracy, a cultural ideology which they described as having "no hierarchies of cultural practice or consumption" and one which would become the backbone of cultural institutions such as the Canada Council for the Arts **(**Beauregard and Paquette, 66). Johnathan Paquette and Devin Beauregard note that although it made moves towards greater cultural accessibility, tastes of the ruling class, who were predominantly male, white, European, and heterosexual, dictated this ideology, meaning there are limitations to the ideologies' inclusive nature (Beauregard and Paquette, 67). This is to say that the notion of cultural citizenship was not horizontal but hierarchal and upheld by dominant heteronormative ideologies. Cultural citizenship has also influenced policies, such as The Multicultural Policy Act. When Pierre Trudeau's government introduced the Multiculturalism Policy, Trudeau created new "resources and programmes to support and implement the policy" (Beauregard and Paquette, 72), which were in part geared towards public arts and culture programs.

The Trudeau government's implementation of multicultural policy, which was partially a strategy towards cultural citizenship aimed to stabilize national identity, was an attempt to unify the country at a time when calls for Quebec and Indigenous sovereignty threatened national unity (Beauregard, 40). In so doing, Trudeau used cultural policy and institutions to produce a liberal Canadian identity. Although this strategy of implementing multiculturalism in cultural institutions did not achieve specific human rights outcomes, it attempted to create spaces that facilitated active participation and the creation of Canadian cultural citizenship. However, these attempts towards cultural participation through multiculturalism were predominately influenced by a policy and ideology that strived to assimilate non-dominant cultural groups. To critique multiculturalism, Beauregard and Paquette emulate Himani Bannerji's framework, which troubles multiculturalism as a political philosophy that hinges on the "recognition" of non-dominant cultures within Canadian society. They align themselves with Bannerji's critique of multiculturalism's essentialist ideology, stating it as a policy which diminishes "culture and identities to predetermined – inherited – traditional identities" (Beauregard and Paquette, 74). Here, I draw attention to the logic of recognition, which insinuates that non-dominant cultural groups must assimilate and adhere to standards set out by a dominant group. I draw parallels between the multicultural assimilation paradigm and homo-assimilation to consider how hegemonic normative logic attempts to influence subjectivity and cultural output. Thus, throughout this thesis, I consider how counter-archive challenges hegemonic normative ideologies that attempt queer and multicultural assimilation. Yet a relevant example of homo-assimilation, which I touch upon in Chapter Two, is the publishing of 1950s lesbian pulp fiction novels which, to be published, adhered to heterosexual romantic standards and views on queer life (Ahmed, 88). The paradigm is also applicable to critiques of sexual citizenship within the

settler colonial state. Scott Morgenson notes that "race and nation" shape queer subjectivity and identity. Morgenson says that white queer people, whose nationality or racial identity benefits from whiteness—which itself is upheld by settler colonialism—do not consider how white queerness supports settler colonialism. Thus, white queer identities are used to sustain settler hegemony because they are often assimilated and actively participate in upholding hegemony, which helps to stabilize national identity. Thus, this phenomenon impacts the lives of Indigenous Queer and 2-spirit persons, queers of colour, and queer migrants (Morgenson, 122 - 123), whose intersecting identities are traditionally maligned by settler colonialism. I draw attention to these examples to consider how white queer ideologies express heteronormativity, a dominant mindset which seeks to standardize and stabilize non-dominant identity.

While not the focus of this thesis, I mention Canadian social and cultural policies here merely to draw attention to several examples of hegemonic logic that have shaped Canadian society since the mid-20th century. Through this thesis, I examine how arts and heritage institutions have directly influenced my case studies of counter-archives and other forms of hegemony that affect the memories, subjectivity, experiences, and lives of counter-archives' subjects. Thus, I explore how the queer counter-archive resists hegemony and normativity. I consider counter-archives as resistance to hegemony, through their creative preservation practices, and because their mobilization queer memory, which is rooted in non-normative subjectivity, is resistant to forms of assimilation. I suggest that queer memory, one which reflects feeling, affect, subjectivity, identity, and experience, challenges the stabilization of identity because the very nature of memory is fluid, ever-changing, and manifold.

Thesis Structure

The first chapter is concerned with developing a theoretical and aesthetic framework, which I'll use when analyzing counter-archival films, and the second and third chapters perform a formal analysis of the case studies. The first chapter expands upon the history of alternative archives and archival practices, conducting a literature review on the archival turn and counter-archival movements, such as archival performance, exhibition, and community archives. As part of this review, I also briefly explore examples of traditional archival principles and institutions. Doing so situates counter-archival documentary film within its scholarly and creative field. Building off this context, I define this project's methodology and framework from the counter-archival and archival examples, as well as from queer theory, queer film theory, film theory, and Canadian film history. This chapter introduces how I plan to formally analyze the selected corpus. Finally, I examine the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute* (Dir. Stephen Dunn, 2018), a short documentary that positions white cisgender gay men as representative of a "diverse" queer Canadian experience. I explore this work to examine how queer narratives have been included in national ways of remembering and thus replicate hegemonic sentiments and homonationalism.

In the second chapter, I examine *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (Dir. Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman, 1992) as a counter-archive which preserves a fragment of mid-20th-century lesbian communal memory. In this chapter, I consider the political potential of lesbian subjectivity, experience, and affect as a challenge to heteronormative and homonormative hegemony. To determine the hegemonic ideologies Forbidden Love responds to, I examine the social ideologies espoused by the National Film Board, which I position as reflective of dominant Canadian liberal hegemony. Through this, I then analyze how formal elements in *Forbidden Love's* mise-en-scene: archival artefacts such as found footage and

personal photographs, as well as interview voiceover over narration, and re-enactment transmit the subject's embodied memories and oral histories of love, loss, community building, and the history of pulp fiction novels. In so doing, I explore how *Forbidden Love* subverts memory and filmmaking practices through a queer framework to challenge the naturalization and assimilation of queer identity. Through this, I position *Forbidden Love* as a lesbian counter-archival utopia which considers how lesbian affect and sensibility produce a world of self-determined queer subjectivity.

The third chapter explores *Sea in the Blood* (Dir. Richard Fung, 2000). Richard Fung's experimental and auto-ethnographic documentary replays memories of illness, migration, and familial and romantic relationships. I position *Sea in the Blood* as a queer archival utopia which uses queerness as a framework to challenge how hegemony attempts to contain identity and subjectivity as a singular experience. I examine the intersections of Fung's racialized, queer, and diasporic subjectivities to contemplate how he uses his positionality to understand and map his memories and relationships with his sister, mother, and partner against the backdrop of social history. To do this, I first consider *Sea in the Blood's* production context as one which challenges fixed-national identity. I then consider the queer potential of family home movies. After that, I determine how Fung uses auto-ethnography to position his relationships with his partner and sister, each of whom navigated life with blood diseases with tremendous spirit and goodwill. Finally, I examine how Fung's queer identity and framework is a window into his diasporic sensibility, one which challenges fixed national identity. Throughout, I perform a formal analysis of *Sea in the Blood* with a queer framework examining its collection of home movies, slide photographs, archival medical film voiceover narration transmitting oral histories, and

animation. Through an analysis of *Sea in the Blood's* mise-en-scene, I argue that Fung's counter-archival utopia positions identity as fluid, multifarious, and polymorphic.

To conclude, I return to Muñoz's definition of archival utopias' and consider it within Michèle Person Clarke's single-channel video *Handmade Mountain* (Dir. Michèle Pearson Clarke, 2019). This work traces memories of Pearson Clarke's wedding against the backdrop of that marriage's divorce. Here I consider how *Handmade Mountain* explores the failure of queer assimilation, which reinforces my argument on the necessity of queer utopias.

Chapter 1:
Queering Counter-Archive

> The archive represents an incomplete and unstable repository, an entity to be contested and expanded through clandestine acts, a space of impermanence and play. Taken as an action, the term "counter-archive" entails mischief and imagination, challenging the record of official history. Employed as an artistic strategy, it pushes our archival impulse into new territories, encouraging critique, material alteration, and fabrication, emboldening anarchvisim. To counter-archive is to counter-act, to rewrite, to animate over. Consider it a take-and-give thing… a negotiation, against the un-commons.
>
> - Brett Kashmere in the introduction to *INCITE* Journal

1.1 "Will You Pass me the Salt?" A relational counter-archive

Enter Fondation PHI, a contemporary gallery in Montréal's Old Port. On the fourth story of 451 rue Saint Jacques, a small white card invites you to be seated at a dinner table. Six place settings, four chairs, mismatched earthenware mugs, bowls, plates, and turquoise saltshakers atop mid-century linen. A sonic murmur envelopes the room: shakers shaking, china clashing, silverware clanging, and tracks of inaudible chatter. Is this a family's dining room? Or an oral history listening lounge? A life-sized diorama? Produced in 2021 during the Fondation Phi's inaugural artist residency, Salima Punjani's "*Will You Pass the Salt?"* is an interactive and affective sculpture that reacquaints the spectator with human contact in the post-Covid world (Phi, 2021). Through an open call, Punjani invited ten Montréal families of different backgrounds to record their "preparation and consumption of a meal in their home" — the soundscape is a fragmented collage of these recordings which accompany the dining-room accoutrements (Phi, 2021). Although intended as a social intervention to probe human connection, this work is an artistic record of its time, one that records and transmits everyday interactions during the COVID-19 pandemic but also one that archives familial memories and rituals at the dinner table.

Part sculpture, part sound installation, Punjani's "*Will You Pass the Salt?"* is an experiential counter-archive, which Kashmere describes as an "unstable repository" (Kashmere, 1). Seemingly devoid of any clear archival trace, no documents are catalogued in boxes, no files that go on for miles, and no single white glove in sight; no genus, taxonomy, or sorting system indicates provenance and original order. The only visible context is a wall text, inviting the viewer to join the immersive and cacophonous choir that transmits memories embodied in a collection of carefully arranged objects. Although located far from the world of documentary film, I begin this chapter with the example of "*Will You Pass the Salt?*" to illustrate the varying forms of counter-archive. I situate "*Will You Pass the Salt*" as a counter-archive because it uses a creative process to produce an affective and relational repository that preserves the subjective experience of resocialization after the COVID-19 Pandemic. It also does so by centering sensorial accessibility (Punjani). The Punjani example is one of several that this chapter explores through a literature review and overview of the creative and scholarly context. As mentioned in the Introduction Chapter's definition of counter-archive, counter-archive can appear as a curated exhibition, video art, a zine or more. I defined counter-archive as an archival process and collection that goes against institutional archival logic to centre experience, affect, and subjectivity in creative or communal archives. In the case of the type of counter-archive, which I analyze, queer Canadian documentary film, I position my case studies as politically resistant to heteronormative hegemony. As heteronormative hegemony attempts to shape queer lives through assimilation, I suggest that a focus on queer subjectivity and affect allows one to understand queer experience as something that rejects singularity and assimilation. Further, emotion and experience are not often considered valid analytical methods or frameworks to understand social positioning and politics, partly due to hegemonic ideas that strive for logic and reasoning. Yet I

argue that affect and subjectivity is intrinsic to queer experience and the very ways in which queerness defines itself as something that goes "against the grain."

To understand counter-archive and its resistant properties as a window into queer memory, I ground this project in a multi-disciplinary framework. This chapter explores literature and film from three key areas: queer studies, film studies, and counter-archival studies. Although not exclusively focused on Canadian studies, many examples from this thesis are from the Canadian context. These background examples aid my analysis of counter-archival films that respond to Canadian heterosexual hegemony. Throughout the literature review, I make note of the intersections between each field; in so doing, this illustrates counter-archival studies as a multi-disciplinary field.

In my section which defines and analyzes the counter-archive, I provide more thorough references than previously mentioned in the first chapter, after which I offer a brief review of other artistic examples by artists such as Stan Douglas, Althea Alburger, Bill Morrison, and Zinnia Naqvi. I draw attention to creative examples because I believe that reading art like scholarly literature acknowledges their creative and intellectual contributions and significance and that they represent their social context. I explore this grouping of creative output, as their aesthetic approaches are like *Sea in the Blood* and *Forbidden Love,* whose essential counter-archival methods use home movies, found footage, archival artefacts, talking head interview voiceover narration to transmit oral history, as well as re-enactment to animate subjects' memories – which I define as counter-archival aesthetics. Through this, I describe my framework, and in so doing, I return to the question of hegemonic heteronormativity and perform a brief analysis of the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute* (Dir. Steven Dunn. 2018). This work uses similar aesthetic tendencies but upholds heteronormativity, homonationalism and homo-

assimilation. I analyze *The Jim Egan Heritage Minute* as an example of queer work adhering to heteronormative ideology. In so doing, I explain how counter-archive challenges heterosexual hegemony, specifically heteronormativity and homo-assimilation, which underscores the need for a memory-making practice which produces a queer utopia. This metaphorical queer roadmap makes sense of the queer place in the world.

1.2 Queer Theories as Seen through the Lens of Queer Utopia

This thesis draws from the frameworks of queer theorists Angela Jones, José Esteban Muñoz, Scott Lauria Morgensen, Anne Harris, Stacey Holman-Jones, Jean Bruce, Sara Ahmed, Rosalind Galt, and Karl Schoonover. I first define how this project considers queerness as an identity, subjectivity, and framework. My definition of queer as both a framework and sensibility foregrounds how I analyze queer counter-archival documentaries as ripe with queer sensibility. As part of my definition of queerness, I expand upon Angela Jones' framework, which considers queer as both a politicized umbrella term to represent the LGBTQ2S+ community but also an individual political identity and subjectivity that rejects normativity (Jones, 1). Jones's broad definition presents queerness as malleable and fluid. Angela Jones's definition is the foundation of how I position queerness's political potential as an individual or a communal identity that disrupts stable and fixed categorization.

As briefly mentioned in the introduction, this project aims to trouble how heteronormativity shapes queer life and, by that, other forms of normativity as well. Jones notes that queerness loses its malleability when hegemonic liberal identity reduces queerness as a struggle focused on a legal desire to adhere to mainstream heteronormative structures (Jones, 2, 5 and 6). In Muñoz's chapter in *Queering Utopia,* "Queerness as Horizon," Muñoz notes how heteronormativity can bind queer political projects towards assimilation, producing

homonormativity, or the desire to be naturalized within mainstream heterosexual society (Muñoz, 21). I explore the role of homonormativity and homo-assimilation in this chapter and Chapter 2 by analyzing *Forbidden Love* as a rejection of homo-assimilation. In the introduction to their text *Queering Auto-Ethnography,* Anne Harris, and Stacy Holman-Jones, building off scholars such as Sara Ahmed and Kimberlé Krenshaw, view heteronormativity through an intersectional lens and consider how it reproduces normative logics of whiteness and other forms of social capital (Harris and Holman-Jones, 4). This intersectional view of heteronormativity's ability to influence other forms of hegemony is helpful, especially in Chapter 3, where I consider how queerness unsettles fixed national logic and speaks to Fung's queer diasporic sensibility in *Sea in the Blood.* Morgenson, who theorizes on settler homonationalism, considers how settler queerness is naturalized and used for nation-building projects to subjugate Indigenous peoples within settler-colonial contexts such as Canada (Morgensen 117). I apply settler homonationalism to my analysis later in this chapter and Chapter 2. Further, I explore queerness as an identity and an analytical tool, viewpoint, and lens through which we can view the world.

Jean Bruce's analysis examines *Forbidden Love,* positioning queerness as an analytical methodology and aesthetic (Bruce, 164) that both "negates and confirms, and offers and denies a coherent sexual subjectivity" (Bruce 166). This is to say that it is a methodology that presents different views of queer life, positing that there is no singular queer way of being, positioning, or methodology. I incorporate Bruce's view of queerness as a methodology into my method, which uses the unstable positioning of queerness to explore fragments of queer sensibility and identity. In this analysis, I do not isolate queerness or say that one's subjectivity defines it. Instead, I consider the individual as an entry point into a broader community sewn together relationality; here, I consider how the individual is connected to constellations of queer collectivity. Muñoz

views queerness along similar multifaceted lines, writing that a queer way of being is "not here" (Muñoz, 11). Instead, Muñoz says that to achieve queerness is to reject heterosexual frameworks and push towards utopias. In "Take Ecstasy with Me," Muñoz's concluding chapter in *Cruising Utopia*, Muñoz describes a queer utopia as:

> An insistence on something else, something better, something dawning. I offer this book as a resource for the political imagination. This text is meant to serve as something of a flight plan for a collective political becoming. These pages described aesthetics and political practices that need to be seen as a necessary mode of stepping out of this place and time to something fuller, more sensual, and brighter. From shared critical dissatisfaction we arrive at collective potentiality. (Muñoz, 189).

Muñoz views queerness and queer utopias as a potentiality or a possibility that queer sensibility shapes, and throughout the text, Muñoz's vision of queer utopias ranges from political projects that explore the past to inform a queer future to aesthetic strategies or creative production. I aim to emulate Muñoz's notion of a queer utopia as a creative output and consider how political queer identity and memory inform queer utopias which embrace non-linear time and non-hegemonic identities, creating visions of a world possible for queer sensibility.

As I consider memory as the central part of building a queer utopia, I examine how queer memories often engage with life in the everyday world and return to Angela Jones, who looks at quotidian queer life. Jones rejects the idea that queer projects are steps or visions towards a utopian world; instead, she considers how acts of queerness within the heterosexual mainstream, such as performance of sexuality and gender (Jones, 8), or expression of desires (14), as acts which produce transgressive pockets of queer utopia in every day heterosexual life, "queer

heterotopias" (5). As this thesis is not concerned with specific temporality, I do not apply a complete heterotopic framework to this project. Yet, I am interested in the idea of the everyday as part of queer transgressions. Thus, my aim here is to consider how everyday queer life is archived and represented in a queer utopia. In the case of a counter-archive, I consider how it constructs or visualizes a queer utopia. Here, I discuss *Sea in the Blood* and *Forbidden Love* as queer utopias that each present a vision of the possibility of a queer world that unsettles normativity, visualizing queer memory through archival aesthetics and a queer sensibility. This analysis contributes to my view of queerness as a framework or an act, especially one that intervenes in everyday life to challenge normativity. Thus, to consider the role of queer aesthetics, I explore aesthetic theories and consider how queer ways of being manifest in queer cultural output.

Sara Ahmed's "Unhappy Queers" explores the role of affect in queer archive. Ahmed considers the role of heteronormativity in shaping queer archives, which are defined by emotional binaries and singular feelings such as joy or, more often, loss (Ahmed, 88). Ahmed's framework applies to my overall theoretical framework, explicitly considering the role that heteronormativity plays in shaping affect and queer memory. I apply Ahmed's historical research on Lesbian Pulp Fiction novels and heteronormative narratives (Ahmed, 107) to my analysis of *Forbidden Love* in Chapter 2. Along with Ahmed, Muñoz's chapters "Ghosts of Public Sex" and "Queer Intermedia as System," chapters which *Cruising Utopia* features, help me consider the role of queer affect with regards to memory, specifically how artistic practice produces affective "structures of feeling" and relational creative archives (Muñoz, 40, 47, and 115). Muñoz's work helps to determine the role of affect and experience in queer counter-archives. While Ahmed is concerned with some examples of film archives (Ahmed, 108), Muñoz's exploration of artistic

and cultural archives predominates in literature and studio arts. My aim here is to emulate a range of foundational theories on queer archival affect and aesthetics and apply queer film aesthetics when analyzing queer counter-archival documentary films. Thus, it is crucial to determine how queer archives and memory appear in queer cinema.

The depiction of queer memory in feature film and television is a phenomenon addressed by Annamaria Horvat in her recent monograph: *Screening Queer Memory: LGBTQ Pasts in Contemporary Film and Television* (2021). Though this work focuses primarily on the British and American examples, it grounds my understanding of the role that memory plays in queer cinema. This text considers experiential and relational memory of queer communities and how queer films have been archived (Horvatt, 6) but does not position queer films as archives themselves. Thus, I emulate her understanding of queer memory as an "unstable category" (Horvatt, 12), which is applicable throughout my analysis but especially so in my analysis of *Sea in the Blood.* Queer Memory's instability supports my overall claim of memory as part of a disruption of fixed and normative logics, which Horvatt says is in part due to how one feels their memories at any time, meaning memories are not marked a specific temporal logic (Horvatt, 9). To address how this appears in the queer counter-archive, I draw upon Rosalind and Galt's text "The Emergence of Queer Cinematic Time," which emulates the work of José Esteban Muñoz and J. Halberstam. Rosalind and Galt define queer cinematic by visual qualities such as "anachronism, a-synchronicity, slowness, excision and eclipses" (Rosalind and Galt, 261, 272 and 273). Their focus on non-linear time and anachronisms is something I look for throughout my formal analysis, which I further define in another section in this chapter.

There are also a select number of anthologies which examine marginalized Canadian filmmaking, such as women's cinema as addressed in *Gendering a Nation* (Armatage et al. 1999)

or queer cinema's relationship to Nation in Waugh's *Romance and Transgression* (2004). These texts have been foundational to my introduction to the history of Canadian cinema, especially so to the fields of queer and feminist filmmaking studies in Canada. Waugh's chapter "Forbidden Love or Queering the National Film Board of Canada" delineates the emergence of queer cinema at the national film board of Canada (Waugh, 147). This chapter draws attention to the intersections of Nation and queerness as part of liberal nation-building projects and the role that documentary aesthetics, specifically the lesbian portrait genre documentary, play in challenging hegemonic heteronormative filmmaking practices (Waugh, 163). I consider the portrait genres' challenge to normative film practices in my analysis of *Forbidden Love* in Chapter 2.

Outside of visual aesthetics, I also consider sound's role in replaying memory, specifically oral history. Typically, oral history, a counter-historical method, is a non-written history that is transmitted and passed down in communities. Most associated with an Indigenous historiographical method, oral history is a historical method used by other non-dominant groups to re-tell histories. In the case of a counter-archival documentary film, I position the talking head interview and voiceover narration as a transmission of oral history as it records and re-tells non-dominant histories. These oral histories articulate subject matter in an affective experiential way. However, oral histories are stored on ephemeral media and considered archival objects in traditional archives when registered. Much like film, this media provides an activated recording of human accounts of memory and personal histories, yet it becomes static when stored in an institutional archive; thus, I argue that oral history is part of the archival process, the collection of a counter-archival film, and the process of collecting memories as well.

1.3 Documentary Film and Counter-Archival Aesthetics

Historical surveys of Canadian cinema and its relationship to citizenship and documentary have often been a focal point in Canadian film studies. Large-scale survey work, such as Beard and White's *North of Everything: English Canadian Cinema Since 1980* (2002) or Melnyk's *100 Years of Cinema in Canada* (2004), focus on a variety of topics, including the history of the National Film Board (NFB), the independent film industry, and cultural policy. There are also more focused texts, such as Zoë Druick's *Projecting Canada: Government Policy and Documentary Film at the National Film Board* (2007) or Thomas Waugh and Ezra Winton's *Challenge for Change*: *Activist Documentary at the National Film Board of Canada,* which interrogate the NFB's practices and its relationship to state policy and nationality. Janine Marchessault and Will Straw's recently published *Oxford Handbook of Canadian Cinema* (2019) includes discussions on Indigenous, queer, and diasporic filmmaking practices. Janine Marchessault and Zoë Druick also examine the role of the Challenge for Change programs as part of the National Film Board's liberal nation-building project (Marchessault, 21) and how the National Film Board was a citizenship-building project (Druick, 126). These foundational texts were part of initial research which helped me consider the role of the National Film Board in producing cinematic citizenship projects steeped in liberal nation-building. I aim to emulate similar frameworks in my analysis in Chapter 2, which interrogates Canada's creative and political landscape and provides a foundation in the historical and scholarly Canadian context for my research, but especially in Chapter 2, which examines how *Forbidden Love* challenges heteronormativity of the National Film Board.

These texts explore the National Film Board's hallmark documentary aesthetics as a method which produces social critique. Some notable aesthetics include cinema-direct, which was

marked by the hand-held camera established by Michel Brault in Quebec but also seen in Indigenous filmmaking, including Alanis Obomsawin's *Kanehsatake*: *370 Years of Resistance* (Dir. Alanis Obomsawin, 1993) or Tanya Ballantyne's *The Things I cannot Change* (Dir. Tanya Ballantyne, 1967); voice of god-narration; and the talking head interview. These examples both critiqued elements of Canadian society and aimed to use documentaries to connect everyday subjects to broader society. There were instances when the National Film Board, a public institution, used its financial and administrative resources to support socially conscious filmmaking, which critiqued the limitations of Canada's supposed social progressivism. It is worth noting that there remains a paradox in this model, with publicly funded films expressing a specific nationalized aesthetic (talking head interview, voice of god narration, cinema direct, etc.) being used to create films that critique Canadian society's conditions. This critique is not unusual for many films produced by the National Film Board. This phenomenon is something that aids in the critique of the Canadian cinematic landscape, especially so with Chapter 2, which analyzes how *Forbidden Love* responds to the nationalized queer hegemony of the National Film Board.

As part of the critique that this thesis performs, I consider how queerness challenges enforce fixed and naturalized ideas of national identity. To assess the intersections between Nation and queerness, I examine Midi Onodera's text "Locating the Displaced View," which recounts Onodera's filmmaking practice and explores queer Asian diaspora within the Canadian context. Onodera, a contemporary of Fung, received funding from public arts councils to produce works such as *The Displaced View.* Onodera discusses the impact of this on her film in her article, "Locating the Displaced View," where she provides an auto-critique of the role that arts councils play in shaping creative practice and how it supports but also limits how an artist can express

their subjectivity (Onodera, 22). Onodera's argument supports my analysis of the production context of *Sea in the Blood* in Chapter 3, precisely pointing to the conditions from which this counter-archive emerged. Lily Cho's work considers the role of policy in shaping the social realities of diasporic Chinese Canadian filmmaking. Lily Cho's definition of diaspora, which she frames as a process of personal and communal connections that transcends geographical boundaries (Cho, 147), also supports my analysis of *Sea in the Blood* in Chapter 3. Additionally, I use Hall's concept of subjectivity and identity as something in constant production (Hall, 392) as part of my overall framework when considering how the production of identity or its non-fixedness challenges normative fixedness.

As this thesis positions personal and communal queer memory as a disruption to heteronormativity, I explore how auto-ethnographic filmmaking facilitates memory's disruptive tendencies. To return to Anne Harris and Stacy Holman Jones, I consider their definition of queer auto-ethnography, wherein the individual is linked to broader cultural and social history, allowing the subject to feel power dynamics, ethics and relations involved in knowledge building (Harris and Holman-Jones, 2). I extend this queer framework to consider how auto-ethnography as a cinematic mode generates critical meaning from personal memories and as an aesthetic production which participates in the process of queer world-building. As noted by Catherine Russell, auto-ethnography emerged from queer and racialized video art and filmmaking practices (Russell, 278). Russell's foundational text on auto-ethnography also supports the framework of auto-ethnographic analysis, which I perform on *Sea in the Blood* in Chapter 3. *Sea in the Blood's* auto-ethnographic critique predominantly focuses on Fung's family life and family archival objects such as home movies. Although less situated as an auto-ethnographic practice, Patricia Zimmerman explores the lineage of mid-century American amateur filmmaking practices,

positioning home movies as archival artefacts which challenged hegemonic American history (Zimmerman, 111). This positioning of home movies as valuable archival artefacts gives them credence as an archival object, which I use to support my analysis of Fung's home movies in *Sea in the Blood* in Chapter 3. Elspeth Kydd also views home movies as such. Still, she explicitly explores their influence on Caribbean-diasporic memory-making practices that connected diasporic Caribbean families (Kydd, 185) and ones that left room for plural engagements with historical narratives, as well as personal identity and subjectivity (Kydd, 186). Kydd's work, which considers how social contexts shape auto-ethnographic filmmaking, supports my analysis of how home movies in *Sea in the Blood* embody Fung's affect, subjectivity, and experience. To further undergird this analysis, I draw from Michael Renov's concept of domestic ethnography, which looks at the positioning of the self within a family unit to connect it with broader historical and political contexts (Renov, 217, 226). I extend each author's work on auto-ethnography to consider how Fung, as the filmmaker, assumes the role of an archivist. The role of a filmmaker as archivist is something that Gerda Crammer ascribes to filmmakers who work with found footage (Crammer, 286) to draw meaning from archival material, placing it inside a counter-archive.

The meaning that a counter-archive produces is not empirical and objective but a subjective, affective, and experiential window into memories of everyday queer life and personal events. To consider how a counter-archive orders archival artefacts, re-enactments, and oral histories inside its mise-en-scene, I examine montage as the aesthetic tendency that fuses elements to bring them meaning. I draw from Jaimie Barron's concept of an appropriation film, which explores how found footage is both an archival document and an archive (Barron, 102). Here, Baron examines the role which montage plays in this instability (Baron,107); she argues that when found footage

is placed inside a documentary film, which is an experiential medium (Baron, 103), it produces an "archival experience." Here, I extend Baron's idea of an archival experience to suggest that a counter-archive brings the experience of an archival artefact, such as a home movie, to life. Still, it also animates the embodied memories by ordering together oral histories and re-enactments. Thus, counter-archives bring to life memory and its affects, using cinematic aesthetics to facilitate this and produce a queer utopia of experience. Counter-archive is a non-normative way to record and transmit memory, furthering the idea that a counter-archive engages with queer sensibilities to reject heteronormativity. I apply this framework to my overall analysis, especially in Chapter 2, where I examine how montage brings meaning to *Forbidden Love*.

I consider Bill Morrison's concept of as film as a "record of social memory" (Morrison), which I position as a non-auto-ethnographic form of recording history. Morrison, the director of *Dawson City Frozen Time* (Dir. Bill Morrison, 2016), a film comprised of found footage of early cinema nitrate prints from Dawson City Yukon, positioned these prints as "physical embodiments of social memory." By this, Morrison considers the nitrate prints to capture or speak to their time's political, cultural, and interpersonal entanglements (Morrison). Here, Morrison believes this capture of "social memory" is present in the images recorded by the camera, which are visible in the prints' frames. This notion of social memory also applies to their extra-textuality, production, exhibition context, storage, or lack thereof, and even how the reuse of the footage re-contextualizes a film's history (Morrison). In short, Morrison's argument hinges on the physical prints as a locus — or starting point — which allows us to consider film as a container wherein it preserves the memories of its time, people, place, and those inside and out. Morrison's concept of film as social memory is part of the central argument of this thesis—that documentary film's ability to record its socio-political context, visible in both its mise-en-scene

and aesthetics, as well as a reflection of the conditions it emerged from, is what makes it an archival record. I argue that documentary as a record of social history emulates both the traditions of documentary film and archival practices, which use archival apparatus to record their social environment. This emulation of traditional archival practices in documentary is, according to Amad, the reason why many films have become archives within themselves—due to their recording capacity (Amad, 2012). Thus, what I deem as a counter-archive and explore within this thesis illustrates how counter-archive repurposes film's typical cinematic function, as it is both an archive and film which records social history.

1.4 Counter-Archive(s)

The previous section surveyed Canadian film history and identified theorists and filmmakers who examine counter-archival modes of documentary film found footage and the role of montage as an affective archival practice, all of which inform my framework. This section explores other counter-archival examples, such as curatorial practices and repertoire. Theoretical frameworks from these practices also inform my analysis and repertoire, which I position as archival performance, which appears in *Forbidden Love's* mise-en-scene. Thus, I draw attention to the film's multi-disciplinary nature to consider how other forms of creative counter-archival practices can be part of a counter-archival film, appearing inside its mise-en-scene. Onodera describes film as "an accumulated palette of painting, sculpture, photography, dance, music, language and storytelling" (Onodera, 20). I aim to build off Onodera's definition, considering how other forms of creative practice archive or transmit memory when placed inside a counter-archival documentary film, destabilizing disciplinary distinctions. Through the brief survey of counter-archival theory from Diana Taylor, Achille Mbembe, Paula Amad, Brett Kashmere and Gabriella Giannachi, as well as several creative and research examples, I reiterate that counter-

archive uses non-normative memory-making practices to both critique how memory is preserved in dominant archival discourse and practices and suggest that it can be maintained through multiple methods and a range of repositories.

Some institutional archival practices traditionally have fixed memory to a singular repository, typically done to adhere to a hegemonic agenda. Archival historian Achille Membe, who interrogates Western power structures, views an archival process as "fundamentally a matter of discrimination and selection," arguing that the archive represents a political and national ideology, not simply a site of neutral data collection (Membe, 20). In this instance, Membe theoretically considers national archives as a physical repository that symbolizes a "public institution" and a collection of documents kept on the same site (Membe, 23). One example that embodies this ideology within Canada is the National Archives and Library of Canada, whose aims are to preserve national heritage and define collective memory (LAC). An arm's length federal institution part of the Department of Canadian Heritage, the LAC is nonetheless shaped by cultural policy and selects material it deems worthy of preservation (Heritage Canada). The LAC prioritizes archival principles used by other institutional and national archives, provenance and original order, and catalogues materials through acts of sorting, storing, and recording material (British National Archives). I should note that the LAC is a tool of settler-colonial nation-building through cultural and heritage policies to create a government apparatus that shapes settlers' everyday lives (Rifkin, 2013). By this, I suggest that because the LAC, which emerged through settler colonialism, aims to preserve only what it deems befitting of Canadian heritage, it seeps into aspects of everyday Canadian life. Many parts of Canadian heritage and memory relate to or manifest in everyday objects, places, monuments, and cultural and embodied practices. Although the Library and Archives Canada has moved towards including Truth and

Reconciliation and equity and diversity and inclusion (EDI) policies to inform its archival policies and collections practice, these changes are still made within the apparatus of an institution and are ultimately meant to strengthen the institution. These are positive changes to institutions, but they continue to work within—and thus renew—dominant frameworks; therefore, they are not truly radical changes to the status quo as they do not reinvent archival systems but improve them. Consequently, I want to consider how non-institutional archives, practices, and repositories provide an archival model different from that of institutions. Counter-archive collecting practices express non-hegemonic ideologies and thus are often a critical response to institutional archival practices defined by hegemony. In the case of this thesis, I specifically explore how queer sensibility influences counter-archives, producing a queer archival worldview.

To understand how other counter-archival practices sit outside of hegemony, I have considered the research project *Archive/Counter-Archive* based at Toronto's *York University*, whose work has influenced my background research. *Archive/Counter-Archive* has developed a national network of artistic, academic, and community archivists who research, produce or work with counter-archival practices. Although they work within an institution and use institutional funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, they work within the public system to create new archival avenues. Archive/Counter-Archives' activities include artist residencies to produce counter-archives, academic graduate courses on counter-archival methodologies, counter-archival policies, and new theoretical frameworks (Archive/Counter-Archive). The genesis of counter-archives should also be attributed to the activities of the feminist archival turn of the 1990s (Eichman, 2013). Paula Amad and Brett Kashmere, responsible for developing the counter-archival field of study, have influenced the

Archive/Counter-Archive's research framework. Brett Kashmere views found-footage films as a counter-archive that disrupts "official histories" (Kashmere, 2018), while Paula Amad, whose work expands the work of Henri Bergson, considers the act of recording in film as counter-archival for the ability to record an event, or a memory, expressing that something is "lived and endured" (Amad, 111). This is to say that Amad views film as something which produces "living memory" (Amad, 122), visualizing and enlivening depictions of memory. Moreover, due to film's indexical qualities, film can use the photograph to inventory (Amad, 125), which is to say, organize and make meaning of memories or objects associated with them. As Amad describes, this process is how film records and archives memories, events, or even everyday events (Amad, 134). Amad's notion of a counter-archive as a visual record informs my analysis of the found footage and photographs in Fung's *Sea in the Blood* and *Forbidden Love.*

Other forms of counter-archives include curatorial work. I return to Giannachi, who examines artistic and curatorial archives, to consider how curated exhibitions generate archival experiences. Giannachi says that curatorial methods that "use the apparatus of the archive to frame found objects and environments" can "establish a relation or present between them and the viewer" (Giannachi, 144). Here, Giannachi is referring to predominately participatory-based archival exhibitions and art – not unlike the Punjani example from the start of this chapter. I apply the experiential aspect of Giannanchi's theory to consider how counter-archival documentary films produce utopias that trace relationality with their subject's memories, objects, families, and communities of a range of intersectional identities. Like Baron, I expand this theory to consider how affect and experience are transmitted through a counter-archive, which Giannachi says "do not only frame, preserve and disseminate, but also increasingly aestheticize our lives." (Giannachi, 152). Although I do not apply theories of spectator's experience to my

work, I do expand upon Giannachi's theory to consider the role of counter-archive as a collection of archival aesthetics and visualizations of memory to produce a utopia that transmits queer sensibility of everyday life. I suppose the affective and experiential components of counter-archive help us understand how *Forbidden Love* and *Sea in the Blood* each act as an "archive of a visceral experience" (Hameed and Vukov, 96).

This sense of the affective or visceral is also applicable to archival performance; reciting and transmitting embodied memory is an artistic form of counter-archive. Diana Taylor's *The Archive and the Repertoire* examines performance across the Americas, positioning it as a practice that transmits cultural memory. Taylor's framework applies to my analysis of re-enactment in documentary, which I view as a form of archival performance. When referring to an excerpt from the play *Yo, también hablo de la rosa* by Emilio Carballido, Taylor considers the role of the body as an embodiment of its environment, an expression of cultural memory. She describes this as "a practice, an act of imagination and interconnection…" one that is "embodied and sensual, that is, conjured through the senses; it links the deeply private with social, even official." (Taylor, 82). Taylor's work relates to how I examine the relationality of individual queer memory, which I argue can trace interpersonal and communal relations to express communal and social history and memory.

Taylor notes the archival repertoire's cultural and political specificity. In her example of the Yuyachakni performance in Peru, Taylor considers this performance, which transmits the Quechua people's Indigenous memory, as a decolonial archival method (Taylor, 197). Taylor notes that in Peru, Indigenous knowledge would not be archived in part due to genocidal practices but also because institutional archives were shaped by colonial logic, which rejected "repertoire" as an archival practice (Taylor, 204 and 204). Although relating to a different

context, I find Taylor's helpful framework, especially when examining re-enactment in *Forbidden Love.* In the context of the queer counter-archive, I argue that heteronormative logic shapes institutional archival methodologies; thus, a queer counter-archive can produce a vision of the queer world, one constructed through non-heteronormative archival practices, which also extends to oral histories. Bhebhe and Ngoepe view South African oral histories as counter-archives, for they are a raw capture of memory (Bhebhe and Ngoepe, 259 and 260). Foote notes that oral histories challenge normative archival logic as their archival properties have not always been accepted as mainstream or normative archival practices (Foote, 383). Like performance, I consider how oral history is an archival process that transmits affect and experience, which I say is sent through talking head interview voiceover narration.

Performance is also used in counter-archival photographic projects, such as Stan Douglas's *Penn Station Half Century (2021)*. In this series, Douglas uses staging and tableau to recreate historical events that lacked official documentation and create photographs to reinterpret what might be missing in pre-existing documentation (Steiner, 4). This practice is seen in the work of Aletha Thauburger, whose photographic series *Althea Lorraine* (2018) collages archive description texts from the National Film Board's archive with photographs commemorating Canada's centennial. Thauburger inserts herself into the frame in these photographs, appearing like Lorraine Althea Monk, the executive producer responsible for the photographs. Thauberger's performance is to (re)imagine the ground-breaking yet complicated feminist role that Monk played in such a national project that upheld hegemonic "national memory" (Frappier). Zinnia Naqvi, whose series *Past and Present II* (2012 – 2015) restages archival family photographs by juxtaposing portraits of parents in their country of origin beside restaged contemporary images of their children in Canada (Dubé). In the instances of Naqvi, counter-archive blends photography

and performance to activate familial links with diasporic memories. All three examples have helped me understand how creative processes address memories outside the traditional archive, which pushes the boundaries of archival methods beyond normativity.

1.5 *Jim Egan Heritage Minute* Homo-national Assimilation of Queer Memory

The year is 1948; enter interior, night, of a dimly lit Toronto cocktail bar. A trumpet blares softly overhead, and ivory piano keys are gently played off-screen. A camera tracks behind a bartender serving a young male patron seated at the counter. Cut to a close-up shot of the same patron, and he is seen sharing a long, tender glance with another man sitting on the opposite side of the bar. The voiceover begins narrating this moment from the patron's perspective: it is his first glimpse of a new love. Suddenly, two police officers enter the bar, and this moment ends, a seemingly innocent act becoming illicit through the presence of law enforcement. What follows from here is a rapid succession of cuts: images of newspaper articles, a man on a typewriter late at night, the same two men from the bar sharing moments of intimacy in their home, and then again in a different house, and again in another home; home movie footage of a 62nd birthday party; a press conference; archival footage of Pride events – the same two men riding off into the sunset on the back of a convertible at 1995 Toronto Pride. These are the lives of Jack Nesbitt and Jim Egan, their 47-year romantic partnership and queer activism that sought same-sex spousal rights. This description recounts Stephen Dunn's *Jim Egan Heritage Minute* (Dir. Stephen Dunn, 2018), commissioned by Historica Canada. At first glance, *The Jim Egan Heritage Minute* appears to be a counter-archive. However, because it centres queer struggle as a quest for heteronormative acceptance, it produces a homonormative vision of queerness, queer assimilation geared towards the pinnacle of life: marriage. I end this chapter with this example to reiterate that a queer counter-archive must express a truly queer sensibility, one which rejects or

challenges any binds of heteronormativity, as opposed to one which frames queerness as a desire towards assimilation.

Save for the Pride parade videotape, these shots in the *Heritage Minute* are visually recounted through re-enacted vignettes of Jack Nesbitt and Jim Egan's life and restaged archival objects such as letters, newspaper clippings and re-enacted home movie tapes. Narrated from the first-person perspective of "Jim Egan," actor Clyde Whitman performs this voiceover and recounts a series of Egan's memories as a political activist fighting for spousal rights, which are also intertwined with reflections on Egan's personal life. Re-enactment, archival artefacts, found footage, and voiceover transmitting oral history are what I position as hallmarks of counter-archival documentary film. Yet, the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute* is not in part because of its temporal structure. The linear narrative structure expresses what Muñoz describes as "straight time" (Muñoz, 22). I consider this editing structure as one which metaphorically speaks to how *the Jim Egan Heritage Minute* presents queerness as a unified struggle headed towards heteronormative recognition. Here, the white gay male experience represents a nationalized queer history, which relates to Morgensen's idea of settler-homonationalism (Morgensen, 121). The editing structure and the singular focus of this work indicate that queer struggle is a linear path with the central goal of gaining recognition by hegemonic structures. Although the history of this form of queer activism is not without merit, how it binds to heteronormativity is not challenged. Marriage and spousal activism do not often take queer sensibility into account. Horvatt notes that queer activism, specifically gay activism, can bend towards neo-liberal structures (Horvatt, 125). While Muñoz views gay marriage as a "flawed and toxic ideological formation," late 90s and early 2000s campaigns towards it were a pragmatic strategy towards queer assimilation in Western societies (Muñoz, 22). In the *Heritage Minute*, Jim Egan's spousal

rights activism represents elements of this neo-liberal and pragmatic ideology. Although the recognition of spousal rights and gay marriage has been essential towards the betterment of queer lives, it cannot be seen as the only end goal and fully representative of queer experience, nor can it be positioned as queerness fully realized or arrived, primarily when it reproduces homonationalist ideology.

Throughout *the Jim Egan Heritage Minute,* Jim Egan's contribution to Canadian history is characterized in a homo-nationalist manner, especially in how Egan's memory is aestheticized. In the final scene, an archival videotape shows Jack Nesbitt and Jim Egan sitting atop a red, open-air convertible at the Toronto Pride Parade. Jim Egan and Jack Nesbitt are surrounded by drag queens in feather boas, dancers, and adoring crowds, cheering them on, almost like a presidential delegate arriving on a state visit. This footage does express a moment of queer communal joy. However, the way that this is framed presents a narrow queer focus. At the end of the sequence, KD Lang, a well-known lesbian Canadian musician, transmits voiceover narration enshrining Jim Egan and Jack Nesbitt as essential to Canadian history. The shot of Egan and Nesbit in the convertible cuts to a closing title credit, which states that their lives were "a part of our heritage.". The title card voiceover changes the context of this footage and presents a singular, didactic meaning about Egan and Nesbit's life, producing homo-national ideology, which in the context of settler colonialism, expresses how sexuality is used to create a settler-colonial project—in this case, sexualized nation building (Morgenson, 117). Here, heteronormativity produces homo-assimilation and a settler-colonial identity, which upholds gay male whiteness as the central queer Canadian identity, which is also visualized throughout the heritage minute. Save for the pride parade, the Heritage Minute is predominantly white. However, the archival footage presents a visibly ethnically diverse crowd, almost as if it's a nod to the "multicultural

mosaic" that is the dominant ideology of Canada. Although it is necessary to consider a diverse and intersectional queer experience when considering and defining collective queer memory, it must be done meaningfully to express self-awareness, critical positioning, and subjectivity that expresses queer sensibility. The latter draws on experience to challenge the status quo. Instead, a move towards diversity appears as an accessory to white male identity, which remains the centre of this story, almost as if racial and ethnic diversity is a visual suture. This footage is tokenistic.

Queer whiteness as the central focus of queer memory is not uncommon in other queer archival projects. Syrus Marcus Ware, who examines trans and queer archives, notes that when queer and trans archives "inscribe a narrative of struggle and resistance," they always centre whiteness (Ware, 171), not unlike *The Jim Egan Heritage Minute*. Ware problematizes queer archives, which he believes can uphold whiteness and homonationalism (Ware, 171), and challenges the phenomenon of the "progress narrative espoused by the white trans movement," which, as many of the previous scholars mentioned, is framed within the question of human rights (Ware, 172). These same rhetorical and political framings apply to the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute.* Linear temporarily is used to describe Egan's memory and queer struggle as a white queer struggle, one which is upheld to espouse a limited queer experience. Although the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute* re-enacts queer memory and archives archival artefacts, it is not a queer counter-archive because it upholds heteronormativity through its aesthetic methodology, which places queer potentiality on a train to heteronormativity. Although it produces some queer affect, it does not do so in the name of queer world-making. It does not present a queer vision of memory-making or a queer vision of life that genuinely challenges the status quo, only a life which desires to adhere to heteronormative values. Thus, I end this chapter with a quote from Muñoz that reinforces the importance of utopia as part of a counter-archival project: "queer

world-making, then, hinges on the possibility to map a world where one is allowed to cast pictures of utopia and to include such pictures in any map of the social." (Muñoz, 40). Thus, a counter-archive must be a way-finder towards queer possibility, one which uses memory to make sense of the world through a queer perspective, not one which is shaped by heteronormativity.

Chapter 2
Forbidden Love: Happy Queers

> I'm more excited by some glorious precedents for thinking of homosexuality as truly disruptive — as a force not limited to the modest goal of tolerance for diverse lifestyles, but perhaps mandating the choice of an outlaw of existence
>
> - Leo Bersani, "Gay Betrayals"

2.1 Queer Joy as Forbidden as Queer Love

Outside of a log cabin in Canada's woodsy northwest, which is assumed to be the province of Alberta, a long shot frames a middle-aged woman clad head-to-toe in denim, an outfit colloquially known as a "Canadian tuxedo." The subject recounts an early romantic relationship from high school in a talking head interview. The camera cuts from the interview to a zoom-out of an illustration of two women in a dormitory. A blond-haired woman stands tall and places her hand on a woman lying in bed, gazing into each other's eyes. As the shot zooms out, the image reveals that the illustration is the cover of the novel *Private School,* whose caption reads: "The girls taught each other about love!" A cut to a new shot reveals a series of books stacked on one another, showing *Private School* as part of a series of pulp-fiction novels. A narrator speaks, describing this stack. We then cut to a medium shot, which frames the new narrator in a talking-head interview at home, where she recounts her first romance. As she speaks, a sequence of images populates the screen: 1950s photographs of a lesbian couple and archival photos of storefronts and city streets. One might find the former tucked away in cardboard boxes in someone's garage and the latter in a municipal archive. Here, these images are juxtaposed to signify a lesbian presence during a period in which lesbianism was outlawed.

This pastiche of interviews, books, and archival images is the opening sequence from Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman's 1992 documentary *Forbidden Love: The Unashamed Stories of Lesbian Lives* (1992). This counter-archival documentary film is a collection of

memories of nine lives and loves of nine lesbian Canadian women who lived at a time when being gay was a crime. In this chapter, I position *Forbidden Love* as a counter-archive which transmits these women's memories to illustrate how their everyday lives challenged state policing and the societal norms that viewed queerness as a societal misdemeanour[2], and as a counter-archive which counters male-dominated queer history. Produced through the National Film Board of Canada's feminist filmmaking unit, Studio D's *Forbidden Love* considers the relationship between nation, memory, and lesbian loves and lives.

The previous analysis of *The Jim Egan Heritage Minute* (Dir. Steven Dunn, 2018) examined how archival aesthetics situates the life of 20th-century spousal rights activist *Jim Egan* as a representative of a collective Canadian experience. I rejected *The Jim Egan Heritage Minute* as a queer counter-archive because it fails to use its counter-archival aesthetics to map queer history, memory, and everyday life. This chapter considers similar questions of heteronormativity, homonormativity, and homo-assimilation, specifically concerning *Forbidden Love's* queer utopian counter-archive challenges normative ideologies. In this thesis, I consider a queer utopia as a political framework and aesthetic practice which creates pockets or visions of a world that is determined by queer sensibility and experience, one which challenges forms of hegemonic normativity. In *Forbidden Love*, the oral histories challenge homonormativity as the nine women recounts the queer counter-communities, structures, and networks which flourished at a time when they could not. *Forbidden Love* uses personal memory to narrativize lesbian Canadian history. If a counter-archive uses the creative process, such as, in the context of this thesis, filmmaking, to preserve memories and histories excluded from "traditional" narratives or

[2] To further understand LGBTQ2SIA+ Rights in Canada see Canadian Encyclopedia entry on queer Canadian history. Rau, Krishna, "Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, and Transgender Rights in Canada." *The Canadian Encyclopedia.* 2021. https://www.thecanadianencyclopedia.ca/en/article/lesbian-gay-bisexual-and-transgender-rights-in-canada

national hegemony, how might queer memories also challenge homonormative structures? This chapter's answer lies in an exploration of *Forbidden Love* as a collection that uses queer archival aesthetics and affect to produce a counter-archive ripe with lesbian joy and happiness. I argue that *Forbidden Love* embraces histories of queer transgression and deviance and explores their affect to subvert institutional film aesthetics, heteronormative hegemony, and heteronormative historiography that characterizes queer memory as one bound by negative affect and struggle.

To examine the role of lesbian joy and happiness in awakening a queer counter-archive, I will continue an analysis of homonormativity and queer aesthetics, which will draw upon Muñoz's concept of a queer Utopia. The study of queer aesthetics and homonormativity will also expand upon Sara Ahmed's work on queer archival affect and Bersani's view of queer identity as disruptive of normativity. With this framework in mind, I will briefly provide background on *Forbidden Love* and situate it within its production context. I will examine how social and aesthetic factors influence *Forbidden Love's* archival aesthetics. Following this, I will analyse *Forbidden Love's* mise-en-scene to consider how personal archival artefacts, such as letters, photographs, found footage, re-enactments, interviews, and voice-over narration, preserve lesbian memory. Ultimately, I argue that *Forbidden Love* is a counter-archive that produces a queer utopia exploring lesbian joy as a political framework, sensibility, and a form of queer worldbuilding.

2.2 Queering the NFB – a challenge to liberal homonormativity

This chapter's opening paragraph, which I described in the previous section, is a description of crucial narrative and visual approaches which aestheticize the memories of *Forbidden Love's* queer subjects. This aestheticization occurs through talking head interviews, which transmit the subject's oral history and include archival artefacts, lesbian pulp-fiction novels, and personal

photographs. The narrated audio clips from the talking head interview show a subject chronicling a formative queer adolescent experience. The juxtaposition of this interview with archival artefacts represents a moment in lesbian history and brings lesbian memory to life. Here, a personal memory of a lesbian romantic experience at a time when it was outlawed is visualized. Here, personal memory is not only visualized but also connected to other facets of lesbian life, pulp fiction novels, which were central cultural experiences, thus illustrating the relationality of queer memory. The aesthetics which appears inside *Forbidden Love's* mise-en-scene are evocative of aesthetic strategies which I have previously identified as part of counter-archive's preservation practice, intrinsic to its utopian queer world-building process. These strategies also reflect the signature styles of the National Film Board of Canada's documentary output, such as the participatory documentary filmmaking seen in the Challenge for Change program and more traditional modes, such as the voice of god narration and the talking head interview. *Forbidden Love's* aesthetics express the National Film Board's documentary legacy, which at times espouses heteronormative nationalist hegemony; how might *Forbidden Love* challenge normativity? Perhaps the answer will lie in a survey of the film board documentary practices.

The National Film Board, a crown corporation founded in 1939 during the Second World War, was initially meant to support the war effort through propaganda films. As a state film producer of film and media, the National Film Board used documentary film as a technological tool to create and reflect ideas of cultural citizenship (Druick, 24). Specific documentary studio projects like the Challenge for Change or the Fogo process often focused on social issues. The National Film Board used these practices to position documentary films as reflecting nationalized liberal progress (Marchessault, 13). Using Foucault, Barry, Osborne, and Rose's definitions of liberalism, Zoë Druick notes that the latter hinges on "freedom and the ability to

act reasonably" (Druick, 22). Druick states that Liberalism in the case of the National Film Board manifests as consensus-building or "middle-way politics" (Durick, 23). This ideology is indicative of the multi-cultural policy example in the introduction chapter, wherein I explored the government's mobilization of multi-cultural policy to encourage an assimilated national identity, one that is rooted in consensus-based politics. Thus, government and public policy operate at both the governmental and bureaucratic levels to shape the activities of the National Film Board. As mentioned, one example of government policy influencing the National Film Board is the passing the National Film Act of 1950 (Heritage Canada, 2023); the legacy of policies such as the Film Act has shaped the National Film Board. Druick describes this as part of a cultural process shaping Canadian lives (Druick, 126).

A curious tension arises between *Forbidden Love's* counter-hegemonic potential and the National Film Board's liberal social values, which define its output. The National Film Board's feminist filmmaking unit, Studio D, which produced *Forbidden Love,* is proudly described on the Film Board's website as the "first publicly funded feminist film production studio in the world" (National Film Board). Although marking a true and vital part of Canadian history, this description has problems. The phrasing appears almost propagandistic in tone, suggesting Canada as a global leader in feminist filmmaking and perpetuating narratives of Canada as an international force for social justice and human rights. Although this statement is not expressly about queer output, I view it as expressing an ideology which is part of a process to naturalize queerness. This concept, Muñoz notes, is a goal of "naturalizing" queerness to fit within the structures and confines of mainstream society (Muñoz, 21), which is, of course, ironic as *Forbidden Love* transmits many oral histories from lesbian subjects who speak about Canada's homophobic history. Thus, I draw attention to what Brett Kashmere describes as the counter-

archive's subversive qualities, which I believe is present in *Forbidden Love* because, although it works within a hegemonic institution, it uses these resources, aesthetics, and styles to produce the possibility of a queer utopia to challenge hegemonic naturalization of queerness.

Through a brief reading of the history of the National Film Board, I argue that Studio D, which produced other queer films during its tenure (Waugh, 147), is part of the state's naturalization of queerness. Studio D's aesthetic approaches draw on traditional documentary styles such as re-enactment (Bruce, 166) and talking head interviews to create a genre of portrait documentary films (Waugh, 163). The example of the portrait film illustrates a few elements that subvert the National Film Board's institutionalized documentary aesthetics. I would like to focus the ensuing analysis of *Forbidden Love* on how transgression within societal structures occurs through the visual production of the subjects' queer memories, subjectivity, and experience in everyday life.

Forbidden Love captures the oral histories of these women's lives but also of lesbian counterculture, including pulp fiction novels which were mailed across North America at a time when homosexuality was outlawed, illegal lesbian bars, cruising sites, and other unexpected locales for lesbian love, all of which were parts of everyday lesbian life. The closing credits so aptly suggest that *Forbidden Love* is a fragment of lesbian Canadian history and does not present a monolithic historical or memorial record. This statement in the closing credit reinforces how *Forbidden Love* uses personal memory to illustrate aspects of queer, lesbian life, lesbian community, ways of being, and a worldview, but not to present a binarized or totalizing record of queer Canadian experience. This concept of a *Forbidden Love* as a queer archival fragment is a challenge to The National Film Board's role as a producer of collective Canadian identity, which

arguably transgresses and subverts bureaucratic ideology. Yet we need to ask: What fragments are memorialized, and how are they acts of transgression?

Returning to Angela Jones's concept of queer heterotopias, the memories of lesbian's daily life archived in *Forbidden Love* illuminates the connection between subversion and transgression. Jones rejects the idea of a queer utopia and the desire for a genuinely queer world, instead considering it from a pragmatic lens that sees queerness as something which challenges the everyday bind of the normative world:

> sites where actors, whether academics or activists, engage in what we might call a radical politics of subversion, where individuals attempt to dislocate the normative configurations of sex, gender, and sexuality through daily exploration of experimentation with crafting queer identity (Jones, 2).

In the case of *Forbidden Love,* I argue that the subjects' memories of their everyday lives illustrate early experimentations with queerness as both an identity and method. That these acts proposed a queer utopian ideal, which is to say, a gesture towards a world eventually determined squarely by queer logic. Instead, I argue that despite heteronormativity's' attempt to shape queer life through a heterosexual standard and logic, queerness challenged heteronormativity through daily experimentations and presentations of queer identity, acts of love, and participation in lesbian cultural life. Angela Jones refers to these acts as heterotopic acts because they exist every day and do not produce a utopia but a subversion of the heterosexual world. I believe that when they archived in a counter-archival documentary, they created a queer utopia. Returning to the definition of counter-archive in the first chapter, it is both process and archival-repository that uses alternative methods to replay and enliven non-dominant memory; I want to consider how both the memories of the queer subjects' everyday life and their aestheticization are part of a

"crafting of queer identity" — a vision of lesbian utopia. In *Forbidden Love,* institutional filmmaking practices – a subversion of heteronormative hegemony – are used to aestheticize and archive their lives and to produce a queer worldview, an act which challenges hegemony. This is to say that, to create a queer utopia, one must engage with acts of queer transgression which still occur in the heteronormative world, meaning that queerness is entirely achievable if the logic of heteronormativity still binds it. To explore this, I want to return to a broader discussion of heteronormativity, this time focusing on homonormativity and its impact on 'queer' as both identity and methodology that influences ways of being, memories, and of course, aesthetic production.

2.3 Queer Aesthetics and Queer Memory

Expanding upon Muñoz's concept of queer utopias, this section considers queer aesthetics as expressions of affect, experience, and non-linear temporality and questions how queer aesthetics challenge hetero and homonormativity. Specific archival aesthetics will be discussed in ensuing sections, while in this section, I explore several queer aesthetic theories which challenge homonormativity. First, I'd like to reiterate the theoretical definition of queerness, which this thesis works with. In so doing, it will help to determine how I analyze *Forbidden Love's* queer and political potentiality. Here, I draw attention to queer theorist Leo Bersani's succinct and all-encompassing view of queerness as "a universal political category"—one which embraces "everyone who resists 'regimes of the normal" (Bersani et al., 12). This quote is excerpted from Bersani's 1997 speech at a Pompidou Symposium, wherein Bersani critiques homo-assimilation in Western society. He describes homo-assimilation as a desire for mainstream societal acceptance, characterized as "the struggle for acceptance as good soldiers, good priests, and good parents" (Bersani et al., 11). I should not that Bersani does not outright

reject this acceptance or naturalization. He is pragmatic, noting that attainments in human rights have improved the quality of life for queer people (Bersani et al. 11). Yet Bersani mentions that focusing queer achievement squarely on human rights removes queer agency concerning queer-world-making and ways of being.

Like Bersani, I cannot entirely reject the benefits of a society that has become queer-friendly. I have, as a gay man, enjoyed many of the privileges brought upon by LGBTQ2SIA+ human rights victories in Canada, yet this does not mean that I accept these victories as the end goal of queerness. Thus, I draw upon Bersani's broad definition of queerness because it defines queering as an act which challenges normative structures that shape queer ways of being and relationality, as well as reflections of these through aesthetics. Thus, with Bersani's framework in mind, I propose that the queer memory, when preserved in a queer counter-archive, disrupts heteronormativity but also a homonormativity that attempt to assimilate queerness to 'acceptable' societal roles. The queer framework which I will use to analyze *Forbidden Love* will also emulate Muñoz's and Jones' theories. Muñoz positions gay marriage as part of a 'gay pragmatic' discourse, noting that spousal rights activist Evan Wolfson saw gay marriage as a way for queers to achieve "social recognition" and to obtain the "financial advantages offered by traditional marriage pacts" (Muñoz, 20). Here, Muñoz notes that gay marriage activism projects were also attempts at queer participation within a hegemonic capitalist society. The Wolfson example reflects Muñoz's concept of queer naturalization, especially regarding the queer desire to be "good" (Muñoz, 20). Similarly, Angela Jones notes that mainstream heterosexual society views queer naturalization as a positive step towards mainstream acceptance of queerness. Like Muñoz, Jones views this form of naturalization as one which occurs within "rights-based

political programs" (Jones, 2), which is to say that, when dominant societies' acceptance of queerness hinges on homo-assimilation, queer ways of being are inhibited.

We must consider how *Forbidden Love* uses queerness as a framework to determine queer memories' political potential in challenging the status quo and producing a queer utopia through aesthetics. To define the normativity which *Forbidden Love* disrupts, I want to draw attention to Sara Ahmed's text *Unhappy Queers,* which analyses archival affect and homonormativity. Ahmed notes that queer archives and queer media have traditionally been sites of loss and mourning, rife with negative affect (Ahmed, 99). Ahmed attributes the lineage of loss narratives in queer archives and media to publication agreements for mid-century lesbian pulp fiction novels, the very same media preserved in *Forbidden Love*. Referencing Vin Packers' 1952 novel *Spring Fire,* Ahmed notes that publishers agreed to release the book on the sole condition that the lesbian relationships depicted would end in death or in heterosexual relationships, which was like the publication of other lesbian pulp fiction novels during this period (Ahmed, 90). Ahmed notes that, in distinction to lesbian love, "heterosexual love becomes about the possibility of a happy ending; about what life is aimed toward, as being what gives life direction or purpose, or as what drives a story" (Ahmed, 90). This is to say that although the very act of publishing lesbian pulp fiction novels was transgressive, 1950s heteronormativity still shaped them. In these texts, publishers made queer identity, subjectivity, and desire to adhere to heterosexual logic, one which punished queer joy.

This form of homonormativity is explored in *Forbidden Love.* There is a shot which tracks over the cover of a novel titled *The Constant Urge* by Donna Richards. A promotional quote reads, "Happy and miserable at once, they were wrecked by their feelings neither could fully understand." In an interview, subject Reva Hutkin describes her experience reading these novels,

which she says, “never worked to anyone’s joy.” In short, because mainstream society viewed queerness as deviance and heterosexuality as a prevailing societal “good” (Ahmed, 89), 1950s heterosexual values dictated the failure of queer relationships and ways of being, forcing the aestheticization of their emotional affect as one determined by loss. Thus, much of the media, stories, and rhetoric that narrativizes queer archives — or even in some counter-archives such as the lesbian pulp-fiction novels Ahmed describes — are dictated by this same heterosexual logic. Although the previously mentioned contemporary example, the Jim Egan Heritage Minute, illustrates mainstream queer acceptance as moulding to heteronormative structures, I note this pulp fiction example to demonstrate how heteronormativity has always attempted shaped queerness.

Despite the feelings of loss and similar negative affect as the overwhelming prescribed characteristic of queer archives and media, the latter can still be places of radical queer possibility. They can be, in the queerest sense, two things at once. For example, Ahmed identifies some lesbian pulp fiction novels as subversive. They work within heterosexual systems, in part because their very depictions of lesbian love and relationships were disruptive to heterosexual society, as lesbian life was so taboo. Thus, in my analysis, I argue that memories of happiness and joy can simultaneously co-exist with queer struggle and resistance and that a counter-archive leaves room to include multiple forms of emotion and affect. To view *Forbidden Love* as a queer utopia, or a living archive that replays a nuanced queer vision of 20th-century lesbian life, I want to consider Ahmed’s concept of counter-archives as a “gesture toward another world” (Ahmed, 107), which is to say that counter-archives are a vision of what it is like to build, even if metaphorically or fantastically, a queer world. Thus, like Ahmed, I am looking for happiness in *Forbidden Love* not for its assimilative tendencies, nor for what Ahmed

describes as the "approximate signs of straightness" (Ahmed, 115), but as a tool to build an affective repository that allows subjects to express their memories, of both love and loss and anything in-between.

To consider how queer world-building is visualized, I use Galt and Rosalind's theory of queer cinematic time to determine how *Forbidden Love* aestheticizes queer memory. Galt and Rosalind note that, typically, cinematic temporarily represents a queer or heterosexual way of being and worldview, describing "straight-time" as something which moves linearly. In contrast, queer time is attributed to having visual and temporal qualities such as non-linearity, anachronism, fragmentation, and slowness (Galt and Rosalind, 261). *Forbidden Love* uses queer cinematic aesthetics and applies it to its editing structure to store and order the oral histories, artefacts, and re-enactments which embody the subjects' memories. Unlike the example of the lesbian pulp fiction novels, *Forbidden Love* rejects homonormative aesthetic and narrative structures through its use of queer cinematic time, allowing for a diversity of narratives, memories, affect, and experiences that are not bound to a specific (linear) temporality. I mention Ahmed's example of negative affect and identify the logic of queer cinematic time to show how queer documentary counter-archives, like any archive, are an interpretation of history and memory; they are, as Muñoz notes, "fiction" (Muñoz, 121). Thus, *Forbidden Love* is part of a lineage of counter-archives that, for Muñoz, produce queer "genealogies and worlds" against prescribed straightness (Muñoz, 123). I suggest that *Forbidden Love* is a transgressive archival utopia, both because it preserves memories of lesbian transgression and because it uses aesthetics to challenge heteronormativity.

2.4 The Queer Portrait Documentary

Another aesthetic tendency in *Forbidden Love* that challenges heteronormativity is the queer portrait genre. Using the work of Thomas Waugh and Jean Bruce, I define the queer portrait film as a documentary mode which positions a queer subject's personal history within broader society. As will be discussed, the portrait genre uses traditional documentary aesthetics, such as talking head interviews, to record and transmit queer subject matter. This, I argue, is a lesbian aesthetic subversion of hegemonic aesthetics—specifically the portrait film produced throughout the National Film Board's history. In *Forbidden Love*, lesbian acts are characterized by subjects who reject heteronormative and homonormative structures but also by the film's visual anachronisms: archival artefacts are intercut with contemporary interviews, re-enactments, and oral histories of memories which have occurred at various points throughout the subjects' lives. I argue that these are transgressions because they sit outside of a heteronormative logic, which is, as Jean Bruce says, "queerly utopic". Bruce views lesbian subjectivity as a disruptor of heteronormative logic, as it "both negates and confirms, offers and denies a coherent sexual subjectivity." (Bruce, 165). I position the acts of transgression in *Forbidden Love* as utopian because they are moves towards a world shaped by lesbian subjectivity, challenging societal norms. Thus, the lesbian counter-archive is an archival utopia because it uses queer aesthetic tendencies, such as the queer portrait genre, to reject heteronormative aesthetics to preserve queer memories that speak to lesbian subjectivity.

When delineating the history of queer film production at the National Film Board, Thomas Waugh describes the portrait genre film as a distinctive characteristic of the Film Board's queer output. This style first appeared in Studio D's productions during the 1970s (Waugh, 164). *Forbidden Love* emulating the portrait genre aesthetic is indicative of its

reflection of institutional aesthetics but also a reminder of what Bruce describes as the link between lesbian films and feminist movements (Bruce, 170), which is to say that lesbian and feminist subjectivities are not mutually exclusive but, instead, connected. The portrait genre film was also Studio D's response to what Waugh describes as the "impersonal" and almost "objective" qualities espoused by voice-of-God narration (Waugh, 164), which was, at one point, the Film Board's signature style and one which became a form of Canadian cultural hegemony. The queer portrait genre, which I argue is a defining characteristic of *Forbidden Love,* is what Waugh describes as an implicit connection between "the narrative of a "typical" individual's life to the collective experience of the whole" (Waugh, 164). The portrait documentary is like the concept of auto-ethnography, which I discussed in the previous chapter as something that links the personal to the political. However, I do not position *Forbidden Love* as auto-ethnographic simply because the filmmakers do not take an active role in the film, placing their subjectivity alongside social history. Yet *Forbidden Love* focuses on individual subjects' memories and how these connect with broader society. Here, *Forbidden Love* archives subjects' memories of their everyday lives to delineate the history of lesbian counterculture and question its place within wider Canadian society.

The portrait genre's aesthetics are partially defined by its cinematographic approaches, which I draw attention to here because of how it records oral histories. In the case of *Forbidden Love,* I argue that the primary cinematographic approach is using a static camera to record talking head interviews. This is a subversion of documentary aesthetics because hegemonic forms of documentary aesthetics are used to record and transmit queer subject matter. In *Forbidden Love,* this subject matter is the personal lesbian histories, which are placed against the backdrop of broader social history. The use of cinematography to record and transmit oral

histories of lesbian experience, as well as the use of archival media from municipal archives and personal archival artefacts, delineates broader lesbian societal struggles, situating *Forbidden Love* as a queer portrait documentary. In *Forbidden Love,* cinematography, and the lesbian portrait genre as a queer method, relates to Bruce's definition of queering as an aesthetic strategy:

> Queering is an activity, as well as an analytical model, that invites us to reconsider the most central and highly held values of a society; queering makes the ordinary appear strange and can provide an opportunity to rethink the logic of the sexual hegemony of social and political institutions. As an aesthetic strategy, its unhinging potential is enormous. (Bruce, 164)

Although cinematography in *Forbidden Love* performs its typical purpose of recording interviews and its subject matter, such as re-enactment and archival artefacts, it also serves a queer subversion by using hegemonic styles to create a record of queer life. In *Forbidden Love,* the queer portrait genre is when cinematography records oral histories of the nine subjects who reflect upon memories of their subjectivity and experience, positioning them in the context of broader social history. The oral histories are used to recount aspects of these woman's lives, such as their first romantic relationships, friendships, encounters with pulp fiction novels, lesbian bars, and other sites of counter-communities. One example includes Jane Healy speaking about her first relationship in 1946, her dates, and notably romantic evenings at Heinzman's private booth rooms in Toronto. Healy also talks about the end of her relationship and her inability to cope because she could not confide in anyone at a time when lesbianism was taboo. Here, Healy contemplates the personal and communal politics of queer life, the challenges, and the joys, and what it means to live a life defined by queer sensibility. In this instance, as in others throughout

the film, cinematography records these oral histories, which may not have been archived or recorded. Thus, cinematography is both an aesthetic and technological intervention that records untold oral histories and, in so doing, transmits essential records of lesbian Canadian life. Thus, the portrait genre in *Forbidden Love* reflects subverted institutional styles, which are queer aesthetic modes determined to depict visions of a self-determined queer world.

2.5 Archival Artefacts

Montage intercuts images of archival artefacts alongside talking head interviews and voiceover narration. Here, editing sorts and orders images of archival artefacts, which give meaning through excerpted audio interviews overlaid atop the photos. If these artefacts were placed in an institutional collection, they would be devoid of audible subjectivity. Gabriella Giannachi notes that when scientific approaches are involved in archival collecting, it removes an artefact's subjectivity and relationality (Giannachi, 59). Thus, the arrangement of these archival artefacts, such as pulp fiction novels or personal photographs of subjects in *Forbidden Love,* divorces the counter-archive from the traditionally sterile archival collections practice, infusing the latter with vibrant, human experience. This technique is a subversion of the National Film Board's voice-of-God narration style, which was once a hallmark style of mid-century filmmaking, as it provides a personal, subjective approach to the subject matter instead of an objective perspective. This approach illustrates the experiential properties of a counter-archival documentary film (Baron, 103). One such example is seen in an interview with Carol Ritchie-Mackintosh, who describes a visit to Hanlan's Point, a well-known queer beach, in the 1940s. Here, Ritchie-Mackintosh describes the social dynamics of the beach, as well as how gay men and lesbian women experienced formative queer moments at the beach and the positive memories of visiting a space where queers could live openly. This oral history is transmitted

through a talking head interview of Ritchie-Mackintosh in her backyard. At various points, the image is intercut with archival photographs of Hanlan's point, the Toronto Island ferry, and even pictures of what is assumed to be members of her community. This is an example of an approach seen throughout *Forbidden Love,* which invites a subjective and affect element to enliven an archival artefact and provide historical, personal, and political context.

In *Forbidden Love,* transgression also appears when new or alternative meanings are inscribed on traditional archival artefacts. This is seen in municipal, and police archival images intercut at various junctures throughout *Forbidden Love*. These archival artefacts, like grainy, black, and white Super 8 footage of Granville Street in Vancouver, often establish shots when subjects speak about nightlife memories at lesbian bars or similar sites. These are often joyous accounts of encounters with the community, lovers, and new friends. Yet these images are also used when subjects speak about state violence, such as police riots on these very same bars. These queer acts of lesbian love and participation in queer communal life were, at the time – between the 1940s to 1960s – transgressions against the state and mainstream social society as homosexuality was outlawed. Here, the same technique of images and found footage appears, intercutting between the talking head interviews and the subject's voiceover between their interview and narration over these archival artefacts. Thus, the counter-archive's transgressive tendencies facilitate a clash between the subjective and objective, pointing to how archival artefacts contain multiple meanings and memories.

What is fascinating about this approach is that objects, typically held in public and institutional archives, are attributed to subjective and personal memory. Here, by intercutting these archival artefacts alongside the subject's voiceover transmitted from talking head interviews, subjects may provide alternative insights that counter the established histories and

memories associated with archival artefacts. Here, personal memory is used for a political function to challenge official historical records while simultaneously creating a space for personal accounts and interpretations of these events. Despite the assumed intensity of police riots in lesbian bars, a singular emotion does not mark these interpretations. There are instances when subjects speak of police visitations on lesbian bars with glee as they revel in their rebelliousness against the state or moments of sorrow, feelings of loss, and triumph when recounting the riots. The subjects' interviews provide a range of emotional expression, facilitated through an artistic process that mixes the talking head interview with voice-over narration and images of archival artefacts, allowing for a robust range of emotional expression. This is part of how *Forbidden Love* is a queer utopia because emotion and personal narratives are central to the process of transmitting memory and are used to analyze lesbian history critically.

To consider how memory attributes new meaning to archival objects, I draw subsequent attention to editing; by intercutting archival artefacts and structuring the order of the interviews and re-enactments, editing creates a non-linear structure and produces visual anachronisms. Here, editing destabilises the hegemonic role of these archival artefacts and images and the institutional modes of documentary filmmaking. The destabilization of police records was also something that occurred during the archival turn as a feminist and lesbian counter-archival tradition, where police records were reappropriated for self-generated archives for auto-ethnographic and political use (Eichmann, 102). Although the Archival Turn, and its typical creative output such as zines or communal archives, is not directly affiliated with *Forbidden Love,* this link situates *Forbidden Love* perhaps alongside feminist and queer movements of that time. Moreover, there are connections between counter-archival documentaries and zines, as the latter both cut, copy, and move images around to make meaning of historical material and

subjective memory. I draw attention to this to reiterate the relations between other forms of queer media whose methods challenge heteronormativity.

As mentioned, personal archival media such as books and photographs express specific moments in time, embodied memories, and signify subjective memories transmitted through oral history. Throughout *Forbidden Love,* we see archival photographs as embodiments of memory, such as in several shots of lovers together playing the piano in their homes, images of women dancing in bars, or a road trip of a lesbian couple visiting Greenwich Village in the 1950s. There are also shots of personal, pulp fiction lesbian novels, which many women cite as formative to their experience. Shots of the novel covers appear throughout *Forbidden Love*, primarily depicting white women in 1950s clothing in romantic situations. Including these images preserves the novels but links them directly to the community they serve. *Forbidden Love's* lesbian subjects describe their memories of finding community and identifying with the subjects of the novels. This oral history, visually juxtaposed with images of the novels, preserves the novels with subjective affect, which may not otherwise be possible in a repository. Moreover, despite how these novels adhere to the homonormative 'goodness' of lesbian failure, many of these women, who acknowledge the novel's pitfalls, describe their own experiences of empowerment when reading these novels, thus illustrating a self-determined relationship with queer media.

Forbidden Love's preservation of archival artefacts and other forms of memory, such as oral histories and re-enactments, is part of a chronicling of what was a once poorly preserved lesbian Canadian history[3]. Many public repositories did not archive lesbian history. As mentioned, there was a dearth of films produced by the National Film Board focused on the history of

[3] To see more about efforts to preserve queer Canadian history, see the ArQuives, who were a groundbreaking leader in preserving queer Canadian history. *Historical Inequities Statement*. ArQvuves. https://arquives.ca/about

homophobia and queer life in Canada. Jean Bruce notes that Lynne Fernie and Aerlyn Weissman's background research to find "evidence of a lesbian cultural history in Canada involved a degree of digging and primary research that would not be quite so daunting today (in part because of the film itself)" (Bruce, 165). Bruce's claim supports the notion that *Forbidden Love* is itself a repository, or as I position it, a counter-archive because it records essential historical research and is a resource for communal history and memory. Thus, *Forbidden Love* participates in the chronicling of lesbian history but is also a film whose process and form transgress institutional cinematic and archival logic.

2.6 Books and Bad Endings

It is helpful to return to the role of re-enactment in *Forbidden Love* to draw attention to it as a transmission of memory. Throughout *Forbidden Love,* four 'fictional' scenes are intercut between interviews and images of archival artefacts. The scenes are lush stylizations of romantic encounters, visualized like covers of mid-century pulp fiction novels. Women are clad in long skirts and buttoned blouses, and settings of bars, cars, and apartments are donned with bright pastel-coloured props and mid-century modern furniture, a palette evocative of post-war life. The four scenes follow a linear narrative arc: the first begins with the protagonist, Laura, parting from her lover on a train platform in a rural Canadian town, and the second, at an urban lesbian bar where Mitch, a mysterious woman at a jukebox, buys Laura, the new girl in town, a drink, the third a night cap shared between the two women in Mitch's apartment, and the fourth, their first sexual encounter and morning coffee in bed which exudes a euphoria.

The film implies that the scenes occur in the mid-20th century — a historical period which is the focus of this counter-archive due to the emergence of lesbian pulp fiction novels and lesbian-Canadian counterculture during this time. Although described as fictional scenes due to their

generic and stylistic components, I argue that these are hybrid documentary and fictional scenes. In these scenes, re-enactment is used to replay scenes stylized like pulp fiction novels and to replay interpretations of a subject's lived experience and memories. In the case of the latter, these re-enactments visualize and record the affective romantic experiences of these subjects, which the subjects describe as formative moments in their lives.

Returning to Taylor, I consider how re-enactment as a counter-archival methodology is related to her idea of the archival repertoire, a collection of performances which re-enact embodied cultural memory within the context of reviving Indigenous cultures in Latin America (Taylor, 204). Because of the legacies of ongoing cultural genocide in the Americas, Taylor points out that the preservation of Indigenous cultural memory has been under threat both due to settler colonialism and settler systems, which do not value performance and oral history as "valid" preservation practices (Taylor, 204). I do not claim that Indigenous knowledge practice is the same as *Forbidden Love's* methodology — which the NFB produced through a settler colonial system. Instead, I apply Taylor's concept of performance as participating in "networks of social memory" (195) as part of my reading of *Forbidden Love;* I examine how a counter-archive uses personal memory to create links with communal memory. *Forbidden Love's* four vignettes, which recount Laura's story, create these links between personal and collective memory, drawing attention to the broader lesbian community and social memory linked with the pulp fiction novels (Bruce, 168). In *Forbidden Love*, archival performance is part of a queer world-building process because it produces visions of queer memory and experience through oral histories. As individuals could not record moments of what were once clandestine queer histories, archival performance is part of queer world-building because it uses a queer methodology to position and prove this history through affective means.

To situate re-enactment within documentary film, I point to Bill Nichols's concept of the "fantasmic subject". Nichols notes that classical documentary traditions have traditionally acted as recorders of indexical images (Nichols, 74), which applies to some of the National Film Board's studio styles, such as the observational approach espoused by the Challenge for Change program (Marchessault,15). *Forbidden Love* does not use recording for indexical purposes to capture the real; instead, recording captures performances of memory (Nichols, 79). This approach, which blends performance or acting into the documentary, is a transgression of the rigid generic boundaries between documentary and fiction and between various forms of counter-archival practices captured by cinematography.

I want to return to an analysis of *Forbidden Love's* mise-en-scene and specifically explore how the aesthetics of re-enactment are evocative of a lesbian utopia. During the re-enactments in the film, dialogue appears campy, and performances are melodramatic. The voice-over is narrated by well-known queer Canadian author and actor Ann-Marie MacDonald, who reads her lines with the same affective style. MacDonald's narration performs each character's inner monologue, giving insight into their thoughts and emotions, which include a mix of nervousness and excitement for a queer romantic encounter. MacDonald reads these lines with a note of camp, which sounds like a story told in a pulp fiction novel. This voice-over narration is also a subversion of voice-of-god narration, which typically privileges a male voice of authority. Although the re-enactments adhere to a linear narrative structure, they are intercut between interviews and shots of archival artefacts, evoking a queer cinematic sensibility. The splicing of re-enactments with modern-day interviews also creates an anachronistic affect, another expression of queer logic. Here, queer cinematic aestheticizes and expresses lesbian joy and exploration, countering the characteristic of lesbian love as an experience of loss.

2.7 Imperfect Happiness

As has been discussed, *Forbidden Love* uses the personal to create a portrait of lesbian Canadian life, a repository which archives multiple fragments of lesbian Canadian memory. Through a queer aesthetic framework, *Forbidden Love* blends genres and modes of documentary and fiction to examine how lesbian subjectivity can challenge hegemonic heteronormativity. These are, of course, the elements of form and content which so uniquely define this counter-archive as an act that transgresses the National Film Board's liberal institutional logic, normative aesthetics, and standards placed on queer life in the mid-20th century. Despite this, there are instances when *Forbidden Love* ascribes to the National Film Board's liberal framework, upholding forms of homonationalism and homo-assimilation. Waugh notes that despite a history of socially informed filmmaking, the National Film Board was slow to fund queer-focused films, and in the 1980s there rose pressure from queer filmmakers (Waugh, 152). During this period, Studio D appeared as one of the first spaces within the National Film Board to support queer filmmaking practices (Waugh, 156). Yet, as Jean Bruce notes, this support came through liberal political correctness, which produced tokenism (Bruce, 148). Although one, in part, could view *Forbidden Love* as a formally and socially radical film, I should note that it was also produced under a partially tokenistic program. Despite being a project that seemed to reject heteronormativity and hegemony, *Forbidden Love* also shows evidence of its tokenism, specifically within its racial politics, which produce moments of implicit othering for its racialized subjects.

Forbidden Love's act of racial othering is influenced by what Bruce describes as the National Film Board's custom of creating films that " gently inform outsiders about a 'different' culture" (Bruce, 166). Indeed, *Forbidden Love* shared stories of lesbian life with the mainstream so

successfully that it won national film awards, such as the 1993 Genie Award for Best Documentary Film (Bruce and Cammer, 13). Although this thesis does not focus much on spectatorship and reception, I mention this to consider how *Forbidden Love* falls prey to some homonormativity. Although *Forbidden Love* does reject hegemonic heteronormativity, the queer identity which it predominately privileges are white lesbian subjectivity, as most of the subjects are white, except for two: Nairobi, who is of Caribbean descent, and Amanda White, who is of Haida descent.

In their interviews, Amanda White and Nairobi sit at the intersections between race and lesbianism. For the white subjects, there is no mention or consideration of race; instead, as dominant culture and structures, whiteness is upheld by, it is assumed, and not mentioned. Meanwhile, Nairobi and Amanda both consider their intersectional identities, alongside discussions of experiences of going to Lesbian bars, dealing with coming out, and, at times, the racism or systemic barriers placed against them that are more pronounced than their counterparts. The visualization of the re-enactments also upholds this whiteness. These scenes only show white leads and background performers adhering to white normative ideology. As these re-enactments speak to a broader embodiment of the experiences of the subject's memories, I question why *Forbidden Love's* re-enactments could not more deeply reflect the racial diversity of its subjects. Here, the re-enactments fall prey to the same whiteness espoused by the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute*, suggesting that whiteness represents a broader queer experience. By upholding whiteness, *Forbidden Love* positions Amanda White and Nairobi, whose experiences are as valid as their peers in the film, as double outsiders. Thus, I mention *Forbidden Love's* racial politics to consider the conditions from which *Forbidden Love* emerged and the director's imperfect work in filling gaps in lesbian Canadian history. Thus, *Forbidden Love* is an imperfect utopia, which is

to say that queer is “not here” (Muñoz, 187), as Muñoz says. Although *Forbidden Love* is a lesbian utopia that, in many ways, challenges the status quo and gestures towards a world of queer possibility, it falls prey to its shortcomings, meaning that queerness has yet to meet its full potential.

Chapter 3:
Sea in the Blood's Queer Diasporic Sensibility

> By definition, diaspora dwells in the disparate. Diaspora attends to communities and peoples scattered across vast geographies and separated by time and distance. However, it is also about connection. At heart, diaspora exists because those very communities that live on despite the traumas of displacement are bound by memory, cultural practice, and how the past haunts the present
>
> - Lily Cho "Diasporic Intimacy: Chinese-Canadian Documentary and the Poetics of Relation"

3.1 Queerly Utopic Possibility

A camera is half submerged beneath a body of water; red-tinted sunlight glares off the lens as it rocks up and down, above and below the water's surface, riding in motion with the waves. Slowly sinking, the image becomes submerged underwater. Sunlight becomes abstracted, and there are shots of silhouetted bodies swimming. Water faintly bubbles, and symbols gently clasp together, forming a soundtrack that crescendos into a trance-like cacophony. Beneath the waves, a shot reverse shot sequence reveals a red sandy surface and a man swimming through another man's legs. There is the sound of a struck harp, and there is a cut to a shot of a different man swimming playfully through the other man's legs. The shot zooms in, and the harp gets louder. Cutting back and forth between shots of the swimmers, again and again, until a fades-in to images of two men in slide photographs. Then, a fade-in to handwritten letters and another fade into a series of pictures. A male narrator replaces the harp, beginning a monologue that recounts summer travel memories with his first love.

This description is the opening sequence from Richard Fung's *Sea in the Blood,* an experimental documentary that is Fung's personal reflection on memories of diaspora, loss, love, and the medical discrimination which both his sister and partner experienced. Told from Fung's personal perspective, *Sea in the Blood* explores the complex intermingling of migration,

diaspora, racial identity, and sexuality. I position *Sea in the Blood* as a counter-archival collection of childhood home movies, photographs, familial oral histories, and medical archives. *Sea in the Blood* examines these archival artefacts and embodied memories through an auto-ethnographic approach, applying a queer lens that considers how queer, racialized, and diasporic subjectivities and experiences intersect, challenging social identity as singular and fixed. I consider how Fung draws attention to identities' multiplicity through narrativizing and connecting multiple memories, which he brings to life and preserves using a queer aesthetic practice that produces a counter-archive. As such, this chapter argues that *Sea in the Blood* creates a queer utopia in which intersecting identities and experiences resist homo-assimilation and challenge heteronormative hegemony.

Unlike previously explored works, such as *The Jim Egan Heritage Minute,* which archives an activist's story as a representation of a collective queer Canadian experience, or *Forbidden Love,* which archives the memories of certain lesbian Canadians and their counter-communities, *Sea in the Blood* does not seek to represent the wider queer Canadian community or even a specific subset of it. Instead, *Sea in the Blood* is a counter-archive that embodies a queer diasporic sensibility and one that is not fixed to a particular national identity. Thus, *Sea in the Blood* presents a queer worldview. Unlike *Forbidden Love, which the NFB produced* with a clear mandate to create Canadian citizenship through film, *Sea in the Blood* was produced independently by Fung with Arts Council funding. Public arts Councils typically operate on a grant-based funding model wherein artists and filmmakers receive funding to create work independently. Onodera notes that this model aimed to support projects centring on the personal voice (Onodera, 22). Although *Sea in the Blood* expresses Fung's personal voice, it does not do so to represent individuality; instead, it positions the individual as an entry point into a wider

community. Thus, by reading Fung's relationship to his diasporic and queer identity through varied interpersonal experiences, this chapter rejects normative ideas of nationality that can be placed on sexuality, as illustrated in the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute*.

Instead, this chapter positions *Sea in the Blood* as an affective register that, as suggested by Muñoz, captures "networks of commonality and structures of feeling" (Muñoz, 47). By this, I mean that *Sea in the Blood* produces a record of Fung's memories, feelings and lived experiences, which are brought to life through photographs of family home movies, photographs, talking head interviews, and the use of medical archives, intercut with a voice-over narration that transmits Fung's memories. The intercutting of archival artefacts alongside Fung's voiceover narration allows Fung to produce nuanced and complex interpretations of events to express various emotions interwoven with personal memory. Like *Sea in the Blood, Forbidden Love* similarly considers interpersonal relationships and queer identity also to reject homonormativity. However, *Forbidden Love* is still an overtly queer counter-archive with a subject matter that examines lesbian memory. The queer question of *Sea in the Blood* is its queer subject matter. How is *Sea in the Blood* a queer counter-archive? Here, I argue that the answer is rooted in a queer subjectivity that rejects a fixed and singular idea about identity and memory. Queering here is an identity and a framework or methodology used to inform Fung's recollection and preservation of his and his family's memories. Expanding upon Muñoz's notion of Queer world-making and queer utopia, this chapter considers *Sea in the Blood* as a queer utopia because it resists homonormativity and heteronormativity as factors which shape Fung's intersecting identities and subjectivity and does so through an aesthetic practice that rejects normative archives. In so doing, it produces a queer utopia, which Muñoz views as an aesthetic practice that creates a queer potential (Muñoz, 125). Queer utopia embraces non-linear temporal logic for a

world which embraces emotion, joy, loss, and queer interconnection (Muñoz, 189) through Fung's creative collecting, seen in the process of creating *Sea in the Blood,* Fung's ruptures traditional archival collections practices that tend to prioritize the singularity and integrity of memory and emotional binaries.

Sea in the Blood is defined by Fung's memories and constructed and aestheticized by a non-linear narrative structure rejecting straight time. On one level, it is arguable that *Sea in the Blood* refuses normative naturalization of sexuality within the family structure, as part of the film explores the experiences of Fung's relationships within the constellation of the nuclear family, yet that is not the only rejection of normativity, the film also resists the naturalization of race, diaspora, and non-normative bodies. *Sea in the Blood* additionally rejects naturalization by intercutting the presentation of archival artefacts with oral histories to produce an auto-ethnographic counter-archive. Here, Fung preserves the memories, experiences, and emotions of familial illness, diaspora, queerness, and, as mentioned, queerness within the nuclear family. Here, Fung rejects an objective sociological interpretation of these various social identities and experiences and instead uses an affective queer framework to make sense of how his and his family members' experiential memories are connected and position them within social history.

Thus, I position *Sea in the Blood* as an affective register of Fung's memories. To consider this, I perform a formal analysis of *Sea in the Blood's* counter-archival aesthetics to determine how they visualize, preserve, and transmit queer memory. To achieve this, I first provide a background on the film, including its production and social context. To explore how a counter-archive mobilizes memory, I then define how Fung uses auto-ethnography to structure his memories using home movies and other archival objects. In so doing, I examine how *Sea in the Blood* presents a queer understanding of familial relationships, romance, and migration to

construct Fung's affective queer utopia, which challenges the social and sexual politics of normativity.

3.2 Queering Fung's Memory

Sea in the Blood (Dir. Richard Fung, 2000) is Fung's counter-archive, which muses on his upbringing in Trinidad, his relationship with his sister Nanette "Nan" Fung, encounters with his first love Tim McGaskell (who became his life partner), and his coming out. Retold through voice-over narration, interviews, archival artefacts, and an auto-ethnographic approach, Fung preserves and replays the story of Nan and Tim's parallel lives, which he links through their respective relations to him, and as marginalized people who both suffered from blood diseases. *Sea in the Blood* also traces the memories of the Fung family's voyages for Nan's medical care and Tim and Richard's mid-80s backpacking trip, which coincided with an episode of Nan's illness and death. *Sea in the Blood* produces a relational counter-archive, using archival aesthetics to create a queer utopia that collects the affective, experiential, and subjective aspects of Fung's memories and subsequently connects these to Tim, Nan, and other members of his family. Through this, Fung ponders how personal subjectivity challenges the singularity of identity.

Much like the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute* and *Forbidden Love,* Fung's romantic relationship is a central focus of *Sea in the Blood*. A counter-archival documentary film requires a primary narrative focus; it acts like a spine that lets vertebrae, threads of memories, their context, associated artefacts, affects, and embodiments unspool. Thus, in *Sea in the Blood,* the story of Tim and Richard's travels structures this counter-archive narrative and allows for musings on familial memory, diaspora, and familial structures. In so doing, Fung preserves the emotions and

affect of these memories and uses the counter-archival film as a way to auto-analyze, relive, and organize these memories and their entanglements with heteronormativity.

In *Sea in the Blood,* Fung collects memories and artefacts, such as slide photographs and home movies — which embody his, Tim's or family members' memories — and replays them, reflecting on them and sometimes even presenting diverging accounts. In so doing, Fung notes the tangible and intangible connectivity of these experiences, producing an anachronistic archival utopia that visualizes and mixes memories from different temporal periods and geographical places from his life. Fung's approach is deliberate; he draws attention to the intricacies of memory, and queerly positions memory as something not bound by linear time or fixed geographical location but as experiences that stay with someone wherever they go. As an aesthetic approach, Fung draws attention to his queer view of his memories and their non-linearity and diasporic subjectivity by inter-cutting home movies from the Fung family archive. In Fung's article "Remaking Home Movies," he notes that home movies document and archive the quotidian, glimpses into everyday lived experience. In *Sea in the Blood,* Fung collects, orders, and stores home movies, drawing attention to how quotidian acts of memorialization can challenge the status quo. One example is the shots of Fung such and his sister playing at the beach as children. Through voice-over narration, he mentions the extra-textual memories associated with these memories, such as those of him and his sister playing dress-up as a child. Here, Fung uses these home movies as entry points to challenge heteronormative logics, which attempt to shape queer, racialized, and diasporic subjectivities.

Like *Forbidden Love, Sea in the Blood's* narrative is replayed through a non-linear temporality and memories of Fung's everyday life are visualized in archival artefacts: home movies and slide photographs. The images are inter-cut throughout the counter-archival film,

replaying memories of Fung and his sister playing on Trinidad's sandy beaches or Fung swimming in oceans with his partner, Tim. The home movies and slide photographs span roughly 30 years, assumed to be between the early 1960s and late 1980s. They also span multiple geographical contexts, including Trinidad, Ireland, England, and Canada, to name a few. These home movies and photographs are arranged thematically around moments in Fung's childhood or Fung's travels with Tim and to respond to Fung's oral history voice-over narration that reflects on his experience. Fung's approach illustrates a queer and affective methodology; he uses experiential memory as a guide for arranging archival artefacts and oral histories representing memory's embodiments across many places and periods, not as something singular and fixed.

Fung's methodology also draws attention to the overlapping subjectivities of Nan, who suffers from the racism of medical discourse, and Tim, who suffers from medical homophobia. For example, when Fung speaks about Tim and Nan's medical discrimination, he intercuts footage of Fung and Nan alongside slide photographs of him and Tim. This approach uses archival images to illustrate connections between Tim and Nan's respective subjectivities. The intercutting also signifies interpersonal connections between Tim and Nan, who, despite having never met, share much in common beyond their medical experiences. The commonalities included both being related to Fung but also that each of them was a significant force in his life, emotionally, personally, and people who granted him the opportunity to express and live his queer identity. Fung's approach inverts the medical system's hegemonic social categorization, which, as Fung notes, positions Tim and Nan as "others" and "outsiders". Instead, Fung draws connections between the two to illustrate how their respective queer and racialized identities are connected, linked and how they also produce unexpected inter-personal solidarities across geographical space and historical time. Fung replaying these memories and drawing attention to

their subjective overlap illustrates Michael Renov's idea of "categories as mutually determining," which Renov goes on to describe as not "self-cancelling" (Renov, 228). I mention overlaps in identity here to consider how one singular experience cannot determine lived experience. Identity is fluid and multiple, and Fung's exploration of queer memory rejects its situation as a binary and determined by heteronormative logic.

I would like to briefly draw attention to *Sea in the Blood's* production context, specifically its funding from the Ontario Arts Council. Midi Onodera, an experimental filmmaker who was a contemporary of Fung's working in the same Toronto Arts Scene, notes the role that public arts funding plays in shaping an artistic practice and how public arts funding views the racial, gender, and sexual identities of an artist's output. In her text "Locating the Displaced View," Onodera states that, in the 1980s and 1990s, arts funding allowed artists to support their practice, a system which she described as one which created "shrines around the personal voice" (Onodera, 22). Speaking from her experience as an artist, Onodera notes that these "shrines" are the results of public institutions which co-opted identity politics, moulding them to their normative ideologies, and in so doing, pigeonholed artistic practice and the creator's subjectivity, making it challenging to understand intersecting identities, multi-disciplinary creative output, and emotional affect (Onodera, 22). Although Onodera's case study is an auto-analysis of her experiences as a lesbian and feminist Japanese Canadian filmmaker working within art funding systems, I draw attention to this example to consider the broader social, cultural, and economic conditions within which Fung's film was similarly created.

Despite being released in 2000, *Sea in the Blood* contains memories which date back as early as the 1950s and until the late 1980s. *Sea in the Blood* benefited from the "shrine of personal" because it received similar public arts funding for its production but perhaps also conformed to

these production standards. Yet, unlike the Onodera critique, this thesis is less concerned about the reception of the identity categories of *Sea in the Blood* or a production analysis of its public arts funders but how these conditions impact Fung's experience and memories and how a counter-archive preserves them. Thus, I consider *Sea in the Blood* can be understood as a rejection of a fixed national identity. Onodera notes that "independent art film [is] the key to the individual" (Onodera, 21). Here I suggest that *Sea in the Blood,* produced through an independent system, allows a self-authored approach to connect the individual to a broader web of experience: memories of family, queer community, friendship, and diaspora. I characterize *Sea in the Blood's* specific self-authored approach as auto-ethnography, which I will explore in the next section. The self-authored approach also means that the counter-archive does not fall prey to a strictly institutional production practice, such as with the example of *Forbidden Love.* This allows the *Sea in the Blood* to destabilize accepted forms of singular identity.

3.3 Home Movies, Homo Movies

As mentioned, the narrative spine is Fung's romantic travelogue and Nan's death, with its visual vertebrate being the home movies from Fung's childhood and photographs from McGaskell and Fung's travels. This section will examine how Fung's use of home movies challenges heteronormative ideologies and the normative nuclear family and consider home movies as an archival artefact ripe with queer political potential. *In Sea in the Blood,* most home movies are from the Fung family collection and were shot by Fung's mother during their time in Trinidad. As Elspeth Kydd notes, within the academic sphere, Caribbean home movies "have long been overlooked as an object of study due to their form, style, authorship and limited access" (Kydd, 188). Fung's inclusion of these home movies situates them as artefacts of historical merit and memories worthy of preservation. Although Fung uses these home movies to

meditate on his identity and experience, he also performs a meta-commentary on the role of home movies as reflecting one's memory, which is what Kydd describes as "a creative reflection on the form" (Kydd, 188). Here, through editing, Fung produces a documentary film, a counter-archive that collects these home movies. Through voice-over narration, it also reflects on the role of these home movies in shaping his memory, his experiences, and his associations with his childhood in Trinidad and his queer identity. Fung's commentary on the role of home movies is part of a broader scholarly, creative, and home-movie archival movement which has legitimized home movies as important historical documents and, in some cases, artefacts worthy of archiving which inform diasporic collective memory (Kydd, 190). Kydd's drawing attention to home movie collecting justifies my argument that a home movie is an object worthy of archival preservation. When home movies are inter-cut into a documentary film, it produces a counter-archive because it is preserved in an alternative archival repository, in this case, a queer archival utopia of Fung's memory. Fung's preservation of home movies is not unusual; as Kydd notes, she catalogued her uncles' films in a physical family archive, which, like Fung, she did to understand Trinidadian diasporic identity (Kydd, 190). Yet, in Fung's case, he catalogues the family films into a film, replaying these images and providing their context through voice-over narration and transmission of oral history.

Throughout the 26-minute-long counter-archival documentary, Fung intercuts clips of family home movies between interviews, photographs, and animations. They are predominately images of a seeming nuclear family in mid-20th century Trinidad. I position these artefacts and their images as queer, not because these home movies include a gay subject (Fung as a child), but because Fung explores personal archival artefacts and non-normative archival artefacts as having a queer potential. As previously mentioned, Fung uses these artefacts to produce a queer utopia

organized by queer affect, memory, and experience. I argue that Fung takes on the role of an archivist to collect home movies and other archival artefacts, along with oral histories recounted through voiceover narration and interview, and to preserve them inside a film's mise-en-scene. Fung's acts of preservation create what Rosalind and Galt describe as "pockets of queer space, time and experience" (Rosalind and Galt, 267), or what I view as a window into queer experience and sensibility. To consider home movies as disruptive to heteronormativity and how *home movies* become *homo-movies,* so to speak, I will explore their familial gender politics, examining their non-hegemonic roles that disrupt normative cinematic aesthetics and archival logics.

Almost all the home movies in *Sea in the Blood* appear to be shot on handheld Super 8, producing an unpolished, shaky, and grainy image. Zimmerman notes that, in the 20th century, there was a distinct stylistic difference between professional and amateur filmmaking, partly due to the lack of "professional" training for amateur home moviemakers (Zimmerman 113). The raw visual language of home movies distinguishes them from the polished style of hegemonic filmmaking movements like Hollywood cinema (Zimmerman 115). Alongside style, the subject matter reflects home movies' "amateur" interests, which typically document family life. Home movies can thus be potentially read as resistant, at least in their technological and artistic methodologies. The practice of home moviemaking is what Renov describes as domestic ethnography, which turns the camera inward towards family life (Renov, 229). In *Sea in the Blood,* the focus of the home movies is predominately on Fung's relationship with his sister, Nan, and their childhood in Trinidad. There are shots of family dinners at the Fung home in Trinidad, the Fung children playing with snow in England during one of Nan's medical trips, the family boarding a plane in the Trinidad airport, and Fung and Nan swimming together as

children. Fung narrates the images in voice-over, where we hear descriptions of the shots' settings, who they were shot by, and other extra-textual information. Also included are Fung's memories and interpretation of events occurring in the frame, and even ones that come before or after them.

The shots intercut with Fung's reflections allow for them to be contextualized by the subject, replacing what would be a label or a descriptor text in a physical archive. Here, these archival artefacts and oral histories animate the memory of Nan's life, Fung's memories of his relationship with Nan, and the social history, such as Trinidadian independence, visits to Europe in the mid-century for experimental medical treatments, daily life, or celebrations. In this instance, Fung's focus on his relationship with Nan highlights the home movies' personal and political nature. On the one hand, they are memorialized for their interpersonal relationships; on the other, they are entry points into identity and social and cultural history. In the case of these home movies, Fung situates them against crucial historical moments in Trinidadian history, such as Trinidadian Independence or the Royal Family's visits to the former colony turned island nation. Again, Fung's interpretation of these home movies illustrates a queer methodology, one that uses affect and experience to draw multiple meanings from non-normative archival artefacts and connects personal and familial memory to broader societal history and spaces. Here, Fung discusses longing, nostalgia, joy, and even premature loss and implies their connection to social history. The socio-political framing of these artefacts is Fung's auto-ethnographic approach, which I will analyze in the ensuing sections.

The role of domestic ethnography also calls attention to the politics of the domestic space. In the case of *Sea in the Blood's* inclusion of home movies, Fung notes that save for a few films captured by his brother, the majority of these were captured by his mother (Fung, 40). The

mother as the familial cinematographer is not uncommon for post-war home movie-making practices. In Hollywood, technical and camera roles were dominated by males. Yet, in the nuclear family, the matriarch would often assume the role of cinematographer, almost fulfilling their societally prescribed duty of maintaining the domestic order (Zimmerman, 119). In this instance, interestingly, the role of the matriarch as cinematographer disrupts the masculine hegemony of cinematography. I read the role of Fung's mother, the home movie cinematographer or documentarian, as an archivist because she records and preserves familial events. This form of archiving destabilizes dominant cinematographic and archival methodologies because it is, as Zimmerman says, "from the point of view of the participants" themselves (Zimmerman, 112).

Fung's inclusion of his mother's footage to replay these memories further cements the role of the filmmaker as the archivist. Fung's archival process also situates the filmmaker as an informal archivist who begins the preservation work after receiving the footage from his mother via the mail in Toronto sometime in the late 1970s (Fung, 29). The footage was then sorted, stored, and recorded through the recording properties of documentary filmmaking and placed inside *Sea in the Blood's* mise-en-scene, thus preserving family memory. Like a home movie archive, Fung creates space for non-dominant filmmaking practices through a nonphysical, informal, and artistic archive. Fung's archival act also makes room for multiple memories: Fung's mother's memories, which are images of events she intended to capture for familial conservation, and Fung's version of events and memories embodied in the footage. Fung's memories are reflections on who he is, his upbringing, his experience, and his understanding of himself as a queer and racialized person. Fung's inclusion of home movies in *Sea in the Blood* destabilizes the space between "subject and object" (Zimmerman, 115) because Fung's and his mother's

subjectivities are now linked to these archival artefacts. Fung's inclusion also illustrates the home movies' queer potential because Fung's queer perspective and methodology interpret them to produce an archival utopia.

Fung's queer perspective or queer sensibility is added to the footage through voice-over narration and interviews, transmitting Fung's and his family's oral histories. Fung's transmission of multiple family members' oral histories complicates the idea of a singular memory, as he notes that numerous memories of an event exist and sometimes even oppose one another. I should mention that not all the oral histories transmitted are queer, yet Fung's intermingling of them with his interpretation of them is what makes them so. In so doing, Fung challenges the heterosexual nuclear family, recontextualizing this memory as rooted in a queer subjectivity which goes against the status quo (Fung, 39). One such example is Fung's mother. Although there are no talking head interviews with Fung's mother, there are a handful of shots of Fung's mother in her garden, presumed to be shot at the same time that Fung records the audio interview with her, appearing in the present day. Fung's mother's audio interview is inter-cut throughout the series of shots of the archival home movies. Here, Fung's mother recounts the story of Nan's medical voyage to the United Kingdom for care that would prolong her life and provides general musings on family life in Trinidad from the 1950s through to the early 1970s. At one point, in the voice-over, she recounts Nan's death, and this oral history is overlaid atop images that depict Nan and Richard's childhood memories. Here, Fung's mother's oral history adds a personal context and perspective to the images; it adds a subjective reflection on the experience of Nan's death and the memories and emotions associated with it. If these home movies were preserved in an official archival institution, the meaning associated with them would be divorced from their personal context and human emotions of loss and nostalgia would be missing. Here, affective

memory is brought to life through oral history, which Fung uses to activate a political commentary on medical discourse.

Of course, Fung's mother's memories account for one version of Fung's family history, which differs from Fung's perspective. Fung notes that, when looking back on these archival artefacts, although brought back in time, he misrecognized, felt an absence of, or even had a different memory of the events recorded by his mother's gaze (Fung, 29). Although Fung is vague on the dissonance between his and his mother's memories, this reading illustrates that memory is not fixed, absolute, or singular and is open to the possibility of multiplicity. Thus, Fung's ability to use a queer methodology to draw out the queer potential of these memories is what makes these memories queer. Fung's inclusion of these multiple accounts speaks to the goal of a counter-archival queer utopia, one that welcomes diversity of memory. In *Sea in the Blood,* this dissonance is aestheticized and re-animated by a voice-over from Fung's mother, Fung's voice-over, and subtitles that go over the frame. In the next section, I will touch on the role of subtitles, which reflect Fung's perspective, which may contradict the memory replayed in the image or suggest that there is a possibility for multiple memories of a shared experience or event.

3.4 Fung's Auto-ethnography, multiplying queer memory

The rest of this chapter will contend with Fung's use of auto-ethnography as an aesthetic mode that creates personal archival contexts to augment archival artefacts in *Sea in the Blood.* Autoethnography allows Fung to situate the personal voice within broader familial, social, and political contexts. The act of domestic ethnography, which has documented Fung family memory, is what Renov views as a process that links a familial object to the author (Renov, 217). In this section, I shift my focus to multiple archival artefacts, performing an analysis of the use

of found footage from medical films, activist media, home movies, and photographs, where I consider how Fung uses animation, editing, and voice-over narration to express Fung's version of these shared memories. I will consider this approach auto-ethnographic that uses film aesthetics to interpret Fung's experience and subjectivity. I examine how Fung uses auto-ethnography to connect himself within the structure of his family but also to medical discourse as well as queer and diasporic social identities. In so doing, I explore how Fung draws links between each identity and destabilizes their singularities. Here I position auto-ethnography as a methodology that produces a queer utopia because it uses the self and lived experience to create an archival world where heteronormative and hegemonic logic does not determine subjects and memories.

When examining the memories of Nan, who lived with Thalassemia, and Tim, who lives with AIDS, Fung explores corporeal experiences and how they are embodied in these two subjects' memories. Fung uses oral history to ruminate on how Nan's, Tim's, and even Fung's body are sites which represent memory – a form of figurative archive. The body is archived in *Sea in the Blood* through voice-over and archival footage. Through auto-ethnography, Fung explores how queer and racialized bodies are body is perceived by hegemonic medical discourse. Fung's exploration of the body as a metaphorical archive is part of a queer auto-ethnographic methodology. In *Queering Auto Ethnography,* Anne M. Harris and Stacey Holman-Jones note that the body has memorial properties and acts as a monument or a marker of queer memories (Harris and Holman-Jones 20). *Sea in the Blood* considers how the corporal reflects memories of lived experience, which might unsettle forms of normativity. Throughout *Sea in the Blood*, Fung focuses on the structural medical barriers Nan and McGaskell faced. Fung does so through an auto-ethnographic analysis where he considers his interpersonal relationships with Nan and Tim

in the context of how prevailing medical discourses attempted to determine each of their identity and subjectivity, which he describes as "medicine's relationship to regimes of social control" (Fung, 34). In Nan's case, this is seen in the archival video about Thalasemia, where, through Fung's editing and animation, Fung draws attention to the racist ideology espoused by prevailing medical research institutions such as the University of Toronto (the film's producer). In Tim's case, this is seen in archival footage of Tim protesting government inaction about the HIV/AIDS crisis. Tim's experience exemplifies what Fung calls as a relationship to regimes of social control because it illustrates how public services deliberately diminished queer quality of life in the face of an existential threat.

A queer reading of Fung's examination of the body applies to Tim's experience as an activist during the 1980s AIDS crisis, which Fung does by replaying his and Tim's memories and connecting them to Nan's. Tim's memories of experiencing medical discrimination and his activism against this discrimination are primarily replayed through Fung's relayed oral history, which frames Tim's illness as something Tim lived with rather than something that defined him. Archival footage of Tim participating in the iconic march at the 1989 International AIDS conference in Montréal, where he protested against government inaction, is one example of replaying Tim's activism. This archival footage is from John Greyson Film's *The World Is Sick (sic) (Dir. John Greyson, 1989).* I position these examples as auto-ethnographic because Fung uses the self, his positionality and relationship as Tim's partner, and his queer memories and experiences as entry points to broader social history. Fung examines these moments in social history not as defining aspects of his and Tim's life but to draw attention to them as a competent of their memory and lived experience. These memories, however, are not purely marked by

Tim's activism but also by Fung's interpretation of their parallels with Nan's experience with racist medical discrimination.

Early in *Sea in the Blood,* Fung notes through voice-over that Nan and Tim suffer from blood diseases. Here, Fung links Tim and Nan, facilitated by his re-telling of their memories. Fung points to racist medical discourse as having an impact on Nan's specific experience with medical discrimination, as it othered and categorized her and people of Asian heritage as unlikely to suffer from Thalassemia, making it difficult for them to access care. Fung frames these experiences through home movies of Nan's medical trips, using an archival medical film about Thalassemia produced by the University of Toronto in the mid-20th century. Fung intercuts sequences from the medical footage that discuss Thalassemia's genetic origin in the Mediterranean region. Fung highlights and contextualizes this categorization within medical discourse through his voice-over, which explicitly mentions the exclusion of Asian people from Thalassemia treatment and research. At the same time, medical archival film also describes people living with Thalassemia as having quote "mongoloid features," an offensive and antiquated term which was formerly used to describe people originating from East Asia and those with Down syndrome. Despite these medical archives' warm pastel colour palette, their tone espouses a cold scientific opinion about how Thalassemia impacts one's subjectivity and lived experience. The medical archives are intercut with Fung family home movies and shots of Fung and Nan playing as children, creating a jarring affect between the discriminatory understanding of Thalassemia and images of subjective memories and experiences from Nan's daily life. Fung's intercutting of footage destabilizes the idea that Nan's childhood was defined by her illness and the discrimination espoused by medical discourse but also places personal memories against the backdrop of social history around racial and medical discourse. Fung's

approach uses editing to connect personal archival artefacts with institutional archives, connecting the personal to the political and the political to the personal. This footage is also intercut with photographs of Fung and Tim backpacking in Central Asia and Europe, creating a visual anachronism highlighting how these disparate memories are connected across temporal lines, such as the 1960s and 1980s.

In both instances, when Fung recounts Nan and Tim's respective memories, Fung uses voice-over narration to share his memories with them. However, Tim McGaskell's medical experience is far less depicted than Nan's, except for a voiceover where Fung says, "Tim takes nearly 50 pills and injections a day and never once complains about it." This moment, which recounts oral history, shows an affective mix of memories. Until this point, Tim's experience has been coded by struggle and activism. Yet, in this instance, Fung infuses resilience alongside traumatic memory. Despite the odds, McGaskell was brave, even when facing the severity of his situation, and was unexpectedly joyful. Fung uses this address to discuss his relationship with his partner and his memories as connected with them, negated and unabashedly viewed through his voice. In the case of Nan, he often uses voice-over to describe how the image in the home movie is different from his actual memory or how it sparks memories of childhood pleasure and joy experienced with Nan. Throughout, Fung recounts stories of dressing up in their mother's pearls or discussions of childhood crushes, which allowed Fung to come out to his sister Nan or Nan's desire to meet Tim. Again, Fung's voiceover infuses joy, longing, and sorrow into traumatic memories. As previously mentioned, the voiceover also serves as a link between Tim's and Nan's experiences.

Animation and subtitles are also auto-ethnographic approaches Fung uses to illustrate the slippage in family memory and how they relate to broader social memory. Throughout the

sequences, which feature medical archives and home movies, Fung remixes medical archives by animating diagrams, subtitles, and title credits to consider the concept of "normality." Regarding medical diagrams of thalassemia patients, Fung imposes a subtitle that moves left across the screen, reading, "There aren't any pictures of Nan in the hospital." Here, the subtitles infuse a personal perspective on an archival artefact. Another example of subtitling is seen in a sequence that describes how Thalasemia becomes a medical condition. In the medical archive, the original voice-over narration discusses normal and abnormal medical coding, which is used to determine thalassemia inheritance patterns. This sequence suggests a view of what medicine views as acceptable: "good" or "healthy" bodies in contrast to bodies excluded from this mould. Fung links heteronormativity, illness, and queerness through animating and drawing diagrams on home movies of Fung, his mother, and Nan at the beach in Trinidad, noting which Thalassemia inheritance patterns each have. In this instance, Fung animates three bubbles, placing one above each figure and annotating personal interpretations of these inheritance patterns. This animation style is almost a direct copy of the diagrams present in the medical archive. Fung notes that he is the only one of the three with what would be perceived as a "normal" inheritance pattern. This is, of course, ironic, as throughout *Sea in the Blood,* Fung recounts many moments of how his queerness has made him feel abnormal within the nuclear family structure. In this instance, Fung uses queer autoethnography to examine his and his family members' bodies, to consider family positioning and social history, but also the fluid nature of identity, implying that one's positioning is not and should not be defined by so-called "normal" and "abnormal" binaries.

In this instance, the inclusion of footage of Nan also relates to what Kydd describes as Hirsch's concept of the "affiliative" look, which considers how a subject identifies universal familial memories and experiences with specific associations with events (Kydd, 189). By

including this footage in the counter-archival documentary film, Fung chose to self-analyze his associations with these memories' duality and transmit multiple affiliations to these memories through a transmission of oral history. Fung's transmission of these oral histories expresses moments of joy and sadness, Fung's feelings about his sister's experience, and Nan's feelings during these moments. These oral histories are an emotional mix of sorrow and happiness; they are nuanced and dynamic, stating that emotions cannot be fixed or singular. Through his montage of archival artefacts and oral histories, Fung draw parallels between his relationships with his partner and sister. Fung expresses their memories and the memories he has of them. In so doing, Fung provides a broader social critique of medicine's ability to dehumanize what hegemonic medical discourse deems as non-normative bodies. Thus, Fung's examination of these varying memories draws out a queer potential because they challenge hegemony but also point to the unexpected queer links that appear in interpersonal relationships.

I consider Fung's focus on Tim and Nan's respective diseases and their relationships to their bodies as part of what Harris and Holman-Jones describe as a queer "monument" or, as I argue, a part of a queer counter-archival utopia. I suggest that in a queer archival utopia, understanding the body as a monument illustrates how memories stay with a person throughout many stages of their lives, personal relationships, and temporal periods. Further, when reconstructed inside an artistic, visual archive informed by queer positionality, these queer monuments are windows into memory mediated through queer experience. Thus, Fung uses auto-ethnography to reinterpret the meaning of archival artefacts, producing a relational queer utopia to express how subjectivity can challenge normativity.

3.5 Family Queer, Diaspora Queer

Sea in the Blood's queer utopia, which offers a window into Fung's queer memory and his process of queer worldbuilding, also uses a queer methodology to make sense of Fung's diasporic Chinese subjectivity. As mentioned in the chapter's epitaph, a quote from Lily Cho's text, "Diasporic Intimacy: Chinese-Canadian Documentary and the Poetics of Relation," diasporic is a sensibility that partially hinges on connection. I want to consider how Fung uses his queer subjectivity to make connections with an identity that transcends national and cultural boundaries. Fung's queer diaspora can be understood in the way that he inserts a queer subjectivity into experiences of the Chinese diaspora, but also in how he uses queerness as a framework that embraces intersectionality and multiplicity. Queer diaspora, in this sense, unsettles monolithic national identities by emphasizing Fung's intersecting identities. Fung uses queer memory to connect a contingent diasporic Chinese consciousness – which cannot be contained to a singular nation – with his family, his relationships, his life based in different geographical locations, and his own queer identity. I again return to the home movie here, particularly as an archival artefact that expresses Fung's identity and consciousness, including his experience growing up in the Caribbean.

I return to and re-read the Home Movies of Fung's childhood and the slide photographs from his travels as expressions of Fung's queer and diasporic consciousness. As has already been discussed, Fung uses these archival artefacts to trace familial, romantic, and relational memory. Here, I read these archival artefacts as ones that are also part of Fung's experiences and diasporic subjectivity. This is to say that, as a queer counter-archive, *Sea in the Blood* highlights the intersections of each of racialized, disabled, queer and diasporic subjectivities. I want to reiterate the idea of home movies and personal and familial artefacts as impressions of social history and

culture but precisely situate them within the Caribbean culture. Elspeth Kydd notes that the same amateur aesthetics that align the Caribbean diaspora with American home movies reflect how Caribbean home movies are "important cultural documents" (Kydd, 190). Here, I suggest that these are both cultural and historical documents which, as previously mentioned, reflect the impact of colonization on interpersonal subjectivity and the effects of movement and migration on one's artistic subjectivity.

This reflection on cultural subjectivity is seen during the sequence where Fung recounts Nan's birthday, a celebratory distraction from medical hardships, which by chance fell on Trinidad's first Independence Day after the 1970s Revolution. Fung's voice-over states that "the whole country celebrated her birthday." This is an example of how he enacts an auto-ethnographic interpretation of childhood home movies, for it contextualizes Nan's birthday against Trinidadian social history. In a humorous, ironic, and tragic tone, Fung links Nan's birthday with a decolonial act: Trinidad's independence from British colonial rule. Fung does not conflate these struggles but instead examines them metaphorically, considering these events celebrations of self-determination. This footage also reflects Trinidad's cultural life in the mid-century. Kydd notes that Trinidad's small economy could not support domestic processing and supply of film stock, thus requiring home moviemakers to use expensive international services (Kydd, 187). The limited means to produce record home movies meant that the latter were typically reserved for documenting notable events. Fung traces this phenomenon when speaking about the Super 8 film, noting that it was only accessible in the United States; thus, the Fung family had a limited supply and had to reserve it for "special occasions" (Fung, 30). This transnational context of home movie production is another symbolic link to diasporic sensibility,

which is not fixed by a singular national context. Put differently, Fung's memories and technological/filmic extension are not produced or contained solely in one national setting.

Kydd notes that home movies reflect larger "imaginings of the nation" (191). *Sea in the Blood* also speaks to this, with one example being the shots of the British royal family visiting Trinidad. Although not a central element of *Sea in the Blood*, these images provide a perspective of someone at a particular time and place. In *Sea in the Blood,* Fung takes quotidian documents that mark specific national locales and objects, including Caribbean beaches, British flats, and heads of state, and signifies them as symbols of formative experiences in producing his identity and subjectivity. Moreover, Renov notes that Colonialism haunts traditional "ethnography" (Renov, 215). Although the spectre of colonialism, such as medical racism, the framing of childhood memories around colonial – royal family visits – and decolonial events, the Trinidadian revolution quietly haunts the film. It is seen as formative to Fung's understanding of his identity. Fung uses personal experience to draw links between personal, political, familial and social history.

Archival artefacts such as home movies also replay migrations, illustrating how Fung's memories and family transcend a singular national context. Here, I want to reconsider how *Sea in the Blood* is a travelogue replaying Fung's travels and familial movement and connecting Fung to his family, a symbol of his cultural identity. Fung intercuts these home movies to create a travelogue which traces domestic and personal migration patterns. They illustrate a diasporic sensibility because they reflect the influence of Caribbean diasporic filmmaking and imply that diaspora and migration shape Fung's understanding of himself and how he uses artistic practice to make sense of his memories.

Moreover, Fung's archival reconstruction of a travelogue also produces links to Fung's queering of the nuclear family. This queering is done through Fung's description of his relationship and travels with his partner Tim, which unsettles the heteronormative logic of the nuclear family structure. Even though Fung's sense of home and cultural identity is linked to his family and its atomic family structure, Fung does not entirely see himself in the nuclear family model, as it is traditionally unwelcoming to queerness. Through archival artefacts such as slide images of his journey or letters from his family members he received during this voyage, Fung replays his production and creation of a queer family. As Fung recounts his travels with Tim at various junctures, the image is overlaid with subtitles revealing how Fung's parents disapproved of the trip. This adds a layer of queer world-building: Fung's elopement-like voyage shows that travel gave him an alternate path towards realizing his queer life. I suggest that Fung's journeys away from his family allow him to understand his queerness. However, his queer identity is not separated from his diasporic identity; Fung connects them both through home movies, voiceover narration, and subtitles which reflect memories of how he would discuss his queer identity and relationship with Tim as well as with his family.

In *Sea in the Blood*, I suggest that Fung's diasporic sensibility is rooted in his relationship with his family. Through Fung's acts of preserving and interpreting the multiple meanings of his personal and familial memories—ones that express his diasporic, queer, and racialized subjectivities—he can consider their queer potential. Thus, Fung produces a queer utopia through aesthetic strategies that present a vision of queerness determined by the affects of joy, longing, loss, and nostalgia. Here, Fung creates *Sea in the Blood* as a practical framework or a roadmap that makes sense of Fung's place in the world. In so doing, Fung considers his position within his family and community, which is not fixed to any geographical or temporal context.

Conclusion

> Archives are what we use to perform our relationships with everything as we continue to search for the yet un-lived in and around us. What enters the archive becomes part of the process of our becoming.
>
> - Gabriella Giannachi, in *Archive Everything: Mapping the Everyday*

A close-up shot fades in from a title credit. In the shot, we see hands fidgeting and gesturing, perhaps in conversation. Voiceover plays overhead, and a narrator, Michèle Pearson Clarke, speaks vaguely about an event happening in her life: her divorce. The narrator explains that she has invited the people who attended her wedding to participate in this conversation about the divorce. Then, through a series of cuts between different interviews, medium close-up shots of the conversation's participants, and voice-over narration, she invites members of Pearson Clarke's queer community to reflect on the significance of gay marriage as she experiences divorce. What I have described here is a short sequence featured in Michele Pearson Clark's 2019 single-channel video *Handmade Mountain* (Dir. Michèle Pearson Clark, 2019) and commissioned as part of the National Film Board's Five@50 program, which is a series of five commissioned videos and documentaries reflecting the state of queer progress in Canada fifty years after homosexuality was decriminalized.

Handmade Mountain is Pearson Clark's reflection on the political underpinnings of queer desire. Much like *Sea in the Blood* and *Forbidden Love, Handmade Mountain* reflects the formal characteristics of a counter-archive. Aside from its visual and audible fragmentation, the credit sequence features archival artefacts, Clark's wedding photographs, which she animates to have figures appear in the photograph's foreground. *Handmade Mountain* is a work that examines what Pearson Clark describes as her "personal trajectory alongside this collective political

trajectory." Produced through the National Film Board of Canada, *Handmade Mountain* reflects the non-normative ideological line of a counter-archive. Retold through a series of recorded conversations that Pearson Clark has with guests who attended her wedding, one of the earliest to be performed in Canada, she and the other subjects ruminate on the queer possibility of marriage but also its failures, namely Pearson Clark's divorce. *Handmade Mountain* is a reflection on the limits of queer progress, one which critically considers what is lost in the compromise of gay marriage within the broader context of non-normative queer subjectivity.

I position *Handmade Mountain* as a counter-archive because it considers how the dissolution of queer marriage shows that queer is "not here," or not fully realized, a rumination that is aligned with the very questions this thesis has considered throughout. In this thesis, I have explored how a counter-archive challenges the status quo, both through memories that express queer subjectivity and also by presenting the counter-archive as an alternative archival repository whose very way of refusing to bend to normative lines. Through an exploration of Muñoz's concept of a queer utopia, I have argued that there is a need for a counter-archive as a practice and repository presenting a vision towards a queer future or a glimpse into a world determined by queer subjectivity. I have explored the counter-archive as a queer utopia, a response and challenge to heteronormativity and other forms of hegemony which attempt to undermine, shape, or assimilate queer subjectivities.

In the first chapter, I defined a framework which draws from queer theory, film history, and counter-archival theories. The framework examines heteronormativity, homo assimilation, and hegemonic histories in Canadian film movements, as well as in archival movements which uphold forms of normativity. I considered examples of documentaries, the archival turn, and other creative counter-archival examples such as repertoire and photograph practices to

challenge normative history but also to present different routes and avenues which express queer, diasporic, and indigenous sensibility, subjectivity, and positionality. I also examined how queer cinematic aesthetics which use non-linearity time, fragmentation, and montage. I analysed *the Jim Egan Heritage Minute* as an example of a work that, despite its seeming counter-archival subject matter, upholds and bends to an ideology that encourages homo-assimilation and homonationalism. From this example, I considered the limitations of queer progress and queer identity as hinged on a desire to homogenize.

In the second chapter, I examined Forbidden *Love* as a counter-archive of personal and communal memories of lesbian life during the 20th century. I positioned *Forbidden Love* as a counter-archive of feeling, one which explores lesbian joy and happiness, among other emotions and experiences, as a way to subvert heteronormative expectations of lesbian life. I defined *Forbidden Love* as a counter-archive because of its aesthetic tendencies, use of archival artefacts, transmission of oral history through voiceover and talking head interview, and re-enactment, which performed the subjects' memories. I surveyed its production context and identified how *Forbidden Love* worked within the National Film Board to subvert its institutional hegemony. Through that, I considered how cinematography is queered in *Forbidden Love* and used to present a portrait film, one which positions the queer subject within the context of social history. By considering *Forbidden Love* as a film which used queerness as a framework to replay its subject's memories, I explored how queer subjects crafted their identities and created community through their interpersonal interactions, romances, transgressions against the state, and pulp fiction novels.

In my third chapter, I examined how *Sea in the Blood* reflects a queer and diasporic sensibility to unsettle singular notions of memory, identity, and nationality. I considered how

Richard Fung uses personal and familial archival artefacts like home movies and slide photographs for an auto-ethnographic analysis which replays his memories of migration, loss, and love. I examined how Fung uses animation and voiceover narration to express divergent and multiple accounts of memories shared with family members and his partner, Tim. I explored how Fung creates relational links between Tim and his sister, Nan, who shared similar yet different experiences with medical discrimination. Through this, I considered how Fung used auto-ethnography to reflect on his place within his family unit and cultural, sexual, and diasporic identities. In so doing, I determined that Fung produced a collection of memories to forge connections across diasporic, temporal, and identarian lines to express and address the fluidity of identity. I suggested that it was also a way for Fung to determine what factors have shaped his identity and how his understanding of himself is rooted in many forms of interpersonal relationships and social history.

Thus, I conclude with the Michèle-Pierson Clark example to consider how the act of becoming queer is still in progress. It is not a finished project but one that is constantly being determined. *Handmade Mountain* insinuates that the act of becoming queer is sometimes an act of unbecoming, rejecting what is perceived to be queer progress (marriage) and understanding its failures (divorce) as the beginning of a queer life beyond homo-assimilation and heteronormativity. *Handmade Mountain* is no different than *Forbidden Love* or *Sea in the Blood,* especially in its presentation of identity, memory, and personal subjectivity as multiple. However, because *Handmade Mountain* rejects gay marriage as the ultimate achievement of queer progress, it is different from the normative narrative presented in the *Jim Egan Heritage Minute. It is* thus a reminder that queerness need not *be* a move towards assimilation. In other words, we need queer counter-archives as a window into what is not yet realized but is on the

horizon. We need queer counter-archives as a map towards a world charted by queer utopia. It is challenging to present a universal solution of how queer counter-archive charts a queer utopian world in all temporal and geographic contexts. Yet, in the case of Canada, I believe that we can use queer counter-archives that use memory, experience, and emotion to chart relationships, alliances, and positionality within contemporary queer countercultures, relationships and communities that resist hegemony. Queer counter-archives as an archival utopia suggest that our ability to replay the past using queer frameworks, sensibilities, and methodologies can serve as an aesthetic gesture towards a future of queer possibility.

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