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Strata-Mapping the Detroit River Border with the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit

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Article abstract

The Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (HPU)'s strata-mapping framework is an experimental research-creation practice that focuses on how spatial meaning is created through a performative "stratigraphic" sensing and researching of a site. The international border between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario makes an especially compelling site for experimental cartographies in light of the conflicts over borders and walls in the current political environment. At the southernmost tip of the Great Lakes system, we focused our attention on this river border as a material site and geopolitical space: it enabled us to investigate alternate possibilities for sensing and envisioning the layered and conjoined histories of this fluid space. The Ojibwe name for this location is waawiiatanong ziibi, "where the river bends," suggesting a radically different spatial imaginary than the divided space that has been established through colonial and national histories. Experimental cartographies can thus help to develop alternate ways of experiencing such sites, an initial step towards decolonizing the spatial imaginary through a project of delinking. In September 2018, we conducted a workshop entitled Buoyant Cartographies, focusing on a performative and intermedial investigation into spatial meanings and their construction on Peche Island, which sits in the middle of the Detroit River. This was one of three Detroit River sites investigated in the workshop, with contributions from workshop organizers and HPU co-conspirator Donna Akrey.

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Strata-Mapping the Detroit River Border with the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit

Taien Ng-Chan

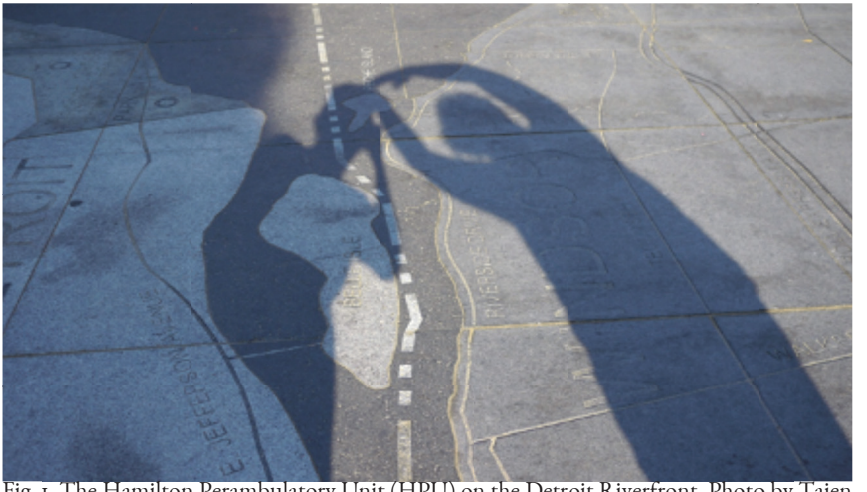

Fig. 1. The Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (HPU) on the Detroit Riverfront. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan.

Introduction

In the early days of September 2018, a group of artists and researchers converged on the Detroit River and its borderlands to investigate the "Buoyant Cartographies" that this particular location demanded. As one of the parties involved in this participatory event (along with Lead Investigators In/Terminus Creative Research Group and Float School[1]), my artist-research collective Hamilton

[1] In/Terminus is led by Lee Rodney and Michael Darroch; Float School is led by Justin Langlois and Holly Schmidt.

Perambulatory Unit (HPU) [2] undertook a "strata-walk" that investigated the different layers of the site. The following essay contextualises this event as an account of intermedial place-making, to demonstrate how experimental cartographic practices can open up space to a plurality of narratives and alternate kinds of knowledge. Inherent in this research is the overarching question of how one can begin to decolonize the spatial imaginary.

¶2 With these concerns in mind, I have conducted a preliminary analysis of the border site through the activities of the HPU and our "strata-mapping" and "autocartography" frameworks, which focus on mapping-as-process––from phenomenological, (auto)ethnographic, and cultural landscape reading methodologies to networked, social, and digital media research. I aim to show how these performative mappings can shape individual experiences (and my own experience in particular, as I can report in detail only on my own senses). The act of tracing complex networks, flows, and hidden knowledge within the border zone can point to fissures in the official narratives where alternative imaginings might be possible. I will begin with a brief overview of the objectives of the study and an introduction to the HPU's frameworks, before situating them in a survey of relevant literatures around experimental and critical processes of mapping. Then I delve into some very preliminary results of the investigation, focusing on a stratigraphic tourist experience of border crossing as well as a look at the "imageability" of Peche Island in the Detroit River, a place of rumour and mystery, now a nature park maintained by the City of Windsor. The overall goal will be to demonstrate the necessity of experimental cartographies as a research-creation methodology in decolonizing and creating alternate narratives, experiences, and knowledge, with the Detroit-Windsor border as a case study.

Objectives

¶3 One of the most pressing issues in Canada today relates to decolonization and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's (TRC) Calls to Action.[3] As a government document, it addresses mainly government agencies and institutions, but the calls can

[2] With collaborator Donna Akrey. http://www.hamiltonperambulatoryunit.org (accessed 15 May 2020).

[3] Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada, Calls to Action, Winnipeg, Manitoba, 2012. Available online: http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf (accessed 15 May 2020).

be taken as a general push for the centering of Indigenous histories and knowledge in all our forms of culture and all levels of society. This would not be possible without also undertaking a project of decolonization, which is necessary to free knowledge from a colonial center that is framed as the default or as "universal." Walter Mignolo speaks of the concept of "delinking," which "brings to the foreground other epistemologies, other principles of knowledge and understanding and, consequently, other economy, other politics, other ethics" in a project to de-centre Western colonial thought and bring about a "de-colonial epistemic shift" towards "other-universality, that is, to pluri-versality as a universal project."[4] The concept of modernity relies on "*the colonization of space and time* to create a narrative of difference"[5] that elevated European languages and categories of thought. Projects of decolonization must then follow two procedures: to show the "partiality and limitations" of the hegemonic modern/colonial paradigm and to grow and expand the "geo- and body-politics of knowledge and understanding. Both are de-linking procedures."[6]

¶4 The goals of delinking are consistent with the aims of critical cartographies and geographies, which also challenge the Western colonial construction of maps and space as "scientific" and "objective." For instance, Denis Wood and John Fels[7] have deconstructed a road map, reading its semiotics to show how, through a system of social and political signifiers, maps construct their power through linkages with the state and with the popular imagination. John Pickles, in *A History of Spaces*,[8] interrogates spatial representation using theorists in Science Studies, such as Andrew Pickering, Bruno Latour, and Ian Hacking, to show how maps can be opened up through social analysis of cartographic practices. In *For Space*,[9] Doreen Massey notes that historically the spatial has a certain "fixity of meaning." She argues for a spatial imaginary that can be significant politically, but for change to occur space cannot be seen as a fixed, predetermined, closed, or static representation. Just as "the text has

[4] Walter D. Mignolo, "DELINKING. The Rhetoric of Modernity, the Logic of Coloniality and the Grammar of Decoloniality," *Cultural Studies*, vol. 21, no. 2, 2007, p. 453, http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/09502380601162647 (accessed 16 May 2020).

[5] *Ibid*., p. 470, italics in the original.

[6] *Ibid*., p. 485.

[7] Denis Wood and John Fels, "Designs on Signs/Myth and Meaning in Maps," *Cartographica*, vol. 23, no. 3, Autumn 1986, p. 54–103.

[8] John Pickles, *A History of Spaces: Cartographic Reason, Mapping, and the Geo-Coded World*, London, Routledge, 2004.

[9] Doreen Massey, *For Space*, London, Sage Publications, 2005.

been destabilised in literary theory so space might be destabilised in geography (and indeed in wider social theory)."[10] Massey advances the recognition of "coevalness" and the existence of trajectories that cannot be aligned into a linear (modern/master) narrative. Places are not coherent, but the meeting-point of potentially discordant or concordant trajectories. For one does not just move through space or across it. Since space is relational and social, one also helps to alter space, co-constitute it, participate in its production. It is thus extremely important to pay attention to the multitude of ways in which this occurs so as not to replicate the status quo, but to work actively towards a project of delinking. However small and seemingly inconsequential as art projects sometimes feel, many alternative imaginings and projects of delinking are needed to achieve the critical mass that can provoke change, not only for decolonization but for so many other projects of emancipation as well.

Fig. 2. HPU logo by Donna Akrey.

A Brief History of the HPU

¶5 Since 2014, the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit has been holding performative walking and mapping events in a variety of public places and institutions, from art galleries and universities to parks, trails, city streets, and on public transit. Indeed, pedagogies in and of public space are central concerns for the HPU, as the three founding members—Donna Akrey, Taien Ng-Chan, and Sarah E. Truman[11]—are all educators as well as artists and/or writers. The methods that HPU have developed in

[10] *Ibid.*, p. 29.

[11] Sarah E. Truman is now continuing her research in walking and pedagogy as a co-director of Walking Lab, http://walkinglab.org (accessed 15 May 2020).

our strata-walks and KM2 ("Kilometre Squared") projects are geared towards a wide variety of audiences and aim to focus attention on the multiplicity of sensory, social, and historical layers that make up place. Using a system of prompts, strata-walkers map their environments in a performative gesture by turning their attention to one element and documenting it in a strata-map. These different strata together give a fleeting impression of place, but following Doreen Massey's call for a fluid geography, are useful for forming a view of space that is made of multiplicities, of vectors and relations, of "stories-so-far."[12]

¶6 Our series of prompts include suggestions on what to look for: texts in the built environment and what "systems" they belong to (street signs—civic, advertising—capitalist, graffiti—poetic or interventionist, etc.), architectural periods, smells, sounds, non-human animals, rhythms, light, electricity. The possible strata are infinite. Some variations have been tailored to address the specificity of the sites where the walks take place. For instance, our Victoria Street/Avenue walk occurred on three different countries (all Commonwealth) and was aimed at highlighting the vestiges of colonialism through street names (Victoria, Queen, King, Duke, etc.). Our Strata-Walk (Mile End Montreal version) was presented at the artist-run centre *articule* in the context of the Montreal Monochome IV: Study Hall conference,[13] which featured the specific theme of decolonizing knowledge production. An early walk in Windsor, presented in the context of an exhibition at the Art Gallery of Windsor called *Downtown/s: Urban Renewal Today for Tomorrow*,[14] focused on how downtown Windsor was shaped by the international high security complex that has controlled and hardened the border, and how the streets are organized around the Detroit-Windsor Tunnel's entrance/exit.

[12] Massey, 2005, p. 119.

[13] Montreal Monochrome is "an annual conference organized by articule's Fabulous Committee (anti-oppression). It aims to address the mis- and under-representation and systemic oppression of marginalized groups in Montréal's contemporary art milieu. The conference works toward imagining and nurturing new and existing bonds, solidarities and friendships between Indigenous artists, thinkers and cultural workers and their racialized allies." https://www.articule.org/en/events/montreal-monochrome-vii-recalibrations (accessed 16 May 2020).

[14] "Downtown/s—Urban Renewals Today for Tomorrow, The 2017 Windsor-Essex Triennial of Contemporary Art," 21 October 2017–28 January 2018, https://www.agw.ca/exhibition/447/downtown (accessed 16 May 2020).

¶7 HPU aims to activate the city and the self for more awareness of how place and space are constructed. Self-location is part of our methodologies, an acknowledgement that the body—that bodies of all shapes, colours, and orientations—can have different effects on how a site is experienced, and what relations are formed. I have written more thoroughly elsewhere on the use of the body as "a spatial sensing instrument, expanded with a practice of phenomenological autoethnography,"[15] the concept of which also informs what I call "autocartography."[16] Autoethnography is becoming a cornerstone in many research-creation practices, often in conjunction with other qualitative mobile techniques such as the "go-along" or "walking-with," the use of video and audio to capture events or atmosphere, and time-space diaries.[17] Just as autoethnography[18] itself is derived from autobiography and ethnography as a political and socially conscious challenge to canonical/colonial ways of doing research and representing others, autocartography refers to a socially conscious process of mapping the sensing self in the environment as well as representing the spatial experience in some way that can be instructive. These methods are "anarchival," that is, not simply creative methods to document research, but ways of knowing-through-making that suggest new iterations. Erin Manning's SenseLab defines the anarchive as "a technique for making research-creation a *process-making engine*. Many products are produced, but they are not *the* product."[19] Sarah E. Truman and Stephanie Springgay's WalkingLab also makes clear the differentiation between the archive—"concerned with preservation and coding practices that aid in the retrieval of data"—and the anarchive, which "aims at stimulating new nodes of production."[20]

[15] Taien Ng-Chan, "Towards the Detour: Commuting as Mobile-Making," *Wi: Journal of Mobile Media*, vol. 11, no. 1, 2017, http://wi.mobilities.ca/towards-the-detour-commuting-as-mobile-making/ (accessed 16 May 2020).

[16] Taien Ng-Chan, "Locating the Critically Creative Quotidian," in Jaclyn Meloche (ed.), *What Is Our Role: Artists in Academia and the Post-Knowledge Economy*, Toronto, YYZ Books, 2018.

[17] Monika Büscher, John Urry, and Katian Witchger (eds.), *Mobile Methods*, London, Routledge, 2010.

[18] Carolyn Ellis, Tony E. Adams, and Arthur P. Bochner, "Autoethnography: An Overview," *Forum: Qualitative Sozialforschung/Forum: Qualitative Social Research*, vol. 12, no. 1, 2011, http://www.qualitative-research.net/index.php/fqs/article/view/1589/3095 (accessed 16 May 2020).

[19] SenseLab–3Ei, "Anarchive: Concise Definition," para. 7, italics in the original, https://senselab.ca/wp2/immediations/anarchiving/anarchive-concise-definition/ (accessed 16 May 2020).

[20] Walking Lab, "Walking Anarchive," para. 2, https://walkinglab.org/portfolio/walking-anarchive/ (accessed 16 May 2020).

¶8 HPU's intermedial practices thus take from concepts of performative and relational events that are themselves producers of new relations and processes. We draw on methods of documentation such as photography, video, and writing that also act to heighten sensory focus. Because the "body-as-sensor" alone cannot detect all strata, many hidden elements of place need other forms of research, whether digital, oral, historical, textual, filmic, etc. There are more strata than meets the eye, ear, or nose; more strata than can be touched or tasted. Historical, literary, and cinematic narratives connected to place are not discernible unless there are traces built in (historical plaques, for instance). Experimental map-reading and map-making techniques are particularly helpful in perceiving the narratives that influence the psychogeographies of place and the construction of spatial imaginaries.

Contextualizing the Field(s)

¶9 Psychogeography has become well-known in recent years as a Situationist methodology, popularized by Guy Debord's practice of the *dérive*,[21] where one wanders according to the sensing of attraction and repulsion in the urban environment. Other psychogeographies exist as well, as detailed by Denis Wood in "Lynch Debord: About Two Psychogeographies."[22] Situationist psychogeography emerged in 1950s Paris, at roughly the same time that Kevin Lynch was experimenting in Boston with his cognitive maps, which were later termed "psychography" and then "psychogeography" by researchers interested in his work *Image of the City*.[23] While the Situationist *dérive* has become widely referenced in spatial and urban theory in general, Lynch's key concept of "imageability" is especially useful for our purposes here: "It is that shape, color, or arrangements which facilitates the making of vividly identified, powerfully structured, highly useful mental images of the environment."[24] These cognitive city-images are unique to the individual (and hence play into my concept of an autocartography), but can be informed by and contribute to more general "spatial imaginaries," which, as defined by Josh Watkins, "refer to ideas about

[21] Guy Debord, "Theory of the Dérive," [1956], in Libero Andreotti, Xavier Costa, and Museu d'Art Contemporani di Barcelona (eds.), *Theory of the Dérive and other situationist writings on the city*, Barcelona, Actar D., 1996, p. 22.

[22] Denis Wood, "Lynch Debord: About Two Psychogeographies," *Cartographica*, vol. 45, no. 3, Fall 2010, p. 185–199.

[23] Kevin Lynch, *The Image of the City*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 1964.

[24] *Ibid.*, p. 8.

spaces and places shared collectively," and can be representational or performative in nature.[25]

¶10 These forms of psychogeographies and spatial imaginaries have informed many practitioners of walking and/or mapping. In *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*,[26] Francesco Careri calls Situationist walking and its precursors in Dada and Surrealism "Anti-Walks," and constructs a lineage through to Land Art and Minimal Art in the 1960s. For him, walking is "an aesthetic tool capable of describing and modifying those metropolitan spaces that often have a nature still demanding comprehension, to be *filled with meanings* rather than designed and *filled with things.*"[27] This approach of making place through meanings could also describe the concept of "deep mapping,"[28] which, as a term, originated in the writings of William Least Heat-Moon,[29] but as an idea speaks to "the creative coalescence of structures, forms, affects, energies, narratives, connections, memories, imaginaries, mythologies, voices, identities, temporalities, images, and textualities."[30] Karen O'Rourke's book *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers*[31] delineates much of the current discourse around walking and counter-mapping practices, from the Surrealist and Situationist use of chance as a technique of "getting lost" to participatory and relational mapping processes, to the use of locational services to annotate space. Theorists are using terms such as "hybrid space" and "networked place" to point to a "new kind of social and spatial interface that changes our relation to embodiment, movement, place and location."[32] Commercial and navigational

[25] Josh Watkins, "Spatial Imaginaries Research in Geography: Synergies, Tensions, and New Directions," *Geography Compass*, vol. 9, no. 9, 2015, p. 509, https://doi.org/10.1111/gec3.12228 (accessed 16 May 2020).

[26] Francesco Careri, *Walkscapes: Walking as an Aesthetic Practice*, trans. by Steven Piccolo, Ames, Iowa, 2018.

[27] *Ibid.*, p. 32, italics in the original.

[28] Ian Biggs, "The Spaces of 'Deep Mapping': A Partial Account," *Journal of Arts and Communities*, vol. 2, no. 1, 2011, p. 5–25.

[29] William Least Heat-Moon, *PrairyErth (A Deep Map): An Epic History of the Tallgrass Prairie Country*, [1991], New York, Mariner Books, 1994.

[30] Les Roberts, "Deep Mapping and Spatial Anthropology," *Humanities*, vol. 5, no. 5, 2016, p. 6, https://doi.org/10.3390/h5010005 (accessed 16 May 2020).

[31] Karen O'Rourke, *Walking and Mapping: Artists as Cartographers*, Cambridge, Massachusetts, MIT Press, 2013.

[32] Mimi Sheller and Hana Iverson, "L.A. Re. Play: Mobile Network Culture in Placemaking," *Leonardo Electronic Almanac*, vol. 21, no. 1, 2015, p. 14,

tools are the most common types of mobile locative media today, particularly GIS (Geographic Information System) services such as Google Maps that can locate you, direct you to practically anywhere you want to go, and suggest nearby stores or restaurants or places of interest; they present the world as landscapes of consumption and surveillance.[33] Many artists engaging with mobile and locative media make disruption and intervention integral parts of their work, for example, with David Pinder's idea of "dis-locative media."[34] All of these representational and performative acts can become layers or strata of place.

¶11 In addition to these embodied and hybridized methodologies of place-making, some theorists argue that some locations can gain meaning principally through historical, cinematic, or literary representation as well as through circulatory systems of photographic images. For instance, James Donald, in *Imagining the Modern City*,[35] investigates how space is constituted through narrative, arguing that our imaginations, being inherently narrative, project events onto urban space like movies onto a screen. However, the effect of these narrative events is real and can thus be thought of as "potent speech acts,"[36] that is, performative actions that provoke real transformations—much like the concept of borders.

Buoyant Cartographies: Alternative Mapping Practices of the Detroit River

¶12 It takes a lot of resources and political will to give an imaginary line the power to manifest, but this power is always tentative, shifting, and contingent. As Anssi Paasi notes, "[B]oundaries are contextual phenomena and can vary from alienated to co-existent, or from interdependent borderlands to integrated ones [...]."[37] The

https://www.leonardo.info/sites/default/files/leavol21no1_la_replay_editorial.pdf (accessed 17 May 2020).

[33] Jeremy Crampton, *Mapping: A Critical Introduction to Cartography and GIS*, Chichester, UK, Wiley-Blackwell, 2010.

[34] David Pinder, "Dis-Locative Arts: Mobile Media and the Politics of Global Positioning," *Continuum: Journal of Media & Cultural Studies*, vol. 27, no. 4, 2013, p. 523–541.

[35] James Donald, *Imagining the Modern City*, Minneapolis, Minnesota, University of Minnesota Press, 1999.

[36] *Ibid.*, p. 123.

[37] Anssi Paasi, "Boundaries as Social Processes: Territoriality in the World of Flows," *Geopolitics*, vol. 3, no. 1, 1998, p. 73, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650049808407608 (accessed 17 May 2020).

Detroit River border is a particularly interesting site in that it is literally ever-shifting, being composed of water, but the surrounding borderlands also manifest a fluidity that can "harden" or "flow" according to context. Buoyant Cartographies[38] brought together artist-researchers, geographers, and historians in a two-day workshop to begin a preliminary site study of the international border region of Windsor-Detroit.

¶13 The event began with a series of presentations from both local and visiting workshop leaders, including the HPU, the In/Terminus Creative Research Group, and Float School, in order to establish the event's themes of decolonial and experimental/counter-mapping practices. The participants headed off to explore both sides of the Detroit River as well as the river itself via a boating expedition done under the guise of tourism, though the majority of the group was composed of locals. As the border region is intensively surveilled, established tourist spaces here allowed for the possibility of our groups' exploration of the bordered landscape relatively unencumbered by border patrol or checkpoints. We thus focused on the narratives that were embedded in these spaces. It should be noted that I am not constructing a simplistic opposition of tourist/outsider and local here. Rather, I am interested in a practice of what I call "detouring,"[39] where tourist discourse around photography, map-reading, and looking/sensing in particular can be applied to everyday travel in an attempt to collapse "the exotic" and "the mundane." This boat excursion was not necessarily a "detour" (which, for instance, turns the routine of a commute into a creative practice), but similarly constructs the tour as a performative space for creative research. The alternative space was signalled in part through the use of handmade semaphore flags that were brought with us on each excursion (Fig. 3).

[38] Some results of the Buoyant Cartographies workshop were presented in *The Living River Project: Art, Water and Possible Worlds* at the Art Gallery of Windsor, 20 October 2018–20 January 2019, https://agw.ca/mk_page.php?a=exhibitions&b=archive&c=list&d=living+river (accessed 17 May 2020).

[39] Ng-Chan, 2017.

Fig. 3. Opening presentations begin with Lee Rodney and Justin Langlois' performative signalling through handmade semaphore flags. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan.

¶14 All participants and facilitators in this event brought forth a complex and fascinating range of erased and forgotten histories, alternate points of view, and creative mapping practices, a larger analysis of which would be most interesting (though outside the scope of this paper); for instance, a comparative study might look at each participant's results using one technique in relation to another. However, the overall goal was not to gather and analyze data, but to create and analyze an experience of place-making, so I am focusing mainly on HPU's contributions here (this particular iteration of HPU being composed of Donna Akrey and myself). As a performative event, the workshop provided an opportunity to investigate an initial question: How can an experimental practice of mapping (both making and reading) help to destabilise the concepts of boundaries and nation-states, to provide alternate views, narratives, and knowledge about a particular site towards a project of delinking?

Fig. 4. A Buoyant Cartographies workbook. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan.

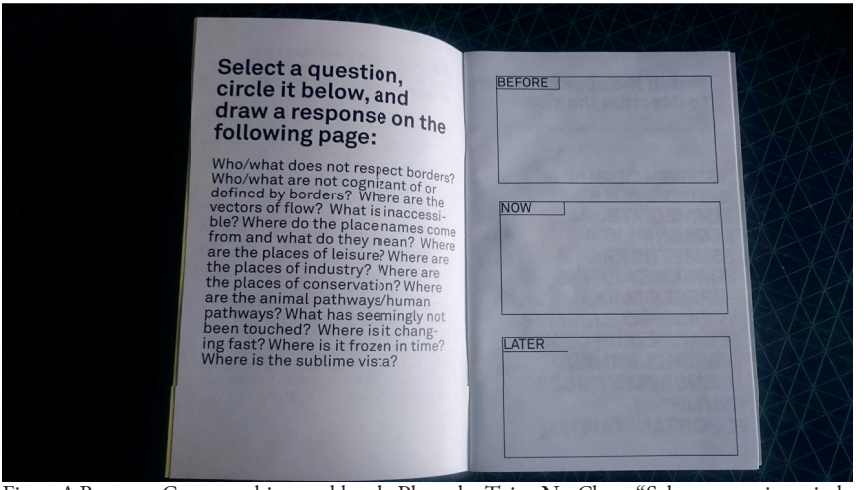

Fig. 5. A Buoyant Cartographies workbook. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan. "Select a question, circle it below, and write/draw a response on the following page (BEFORE, NOW, LATER): Who/what does not respect borders? Who/what are not cognizant of or defined by borders? Where are the vectors of flow? Where is inaccessible? Where do the place names come from and what do they mean? Identify the places of leisure; Identify the places of industry; Identify the places of conservation; Identify animal pathways/human pathways. What has seemingly not been touched? Where is it changing fast or frozen in time? Where is the sublime vista?"

¶15 After the initial presentations that provided an overview to the goals and methods of the workshop, participants were asked to take notes and observations

using workbooks that were made collaboratively with the other workshop leaders and included the following HPU prompts (Fig. 4 and 5):

> **Once you begin exploring the site,**
> **here are some keywords to hold on**
> **to in the back of your mind: Perspective,**
> **contour, mapping from above AND below,**
> **liminal water spaces, vacancies,**
> **built environment vs. natural space,**
> **flows and vectors**

Another HPU exercise in the workbook offered several icons to denote different strata, to be drawn on vellum over a basemap of each site (Fig. 6). While participants were of course free to note any sensation, observation, feeling, or fact, these HPU icons suggested certain strata to look for that seemed particularly apropos of the Detroit-Windsor borderlands. These included strata for "fast change" (places in development) and "frozen time" (places with associated nostalgia and history), which were perhaps the dominant strata observed, as the next section explores. These strata point out the narratives in the spatial imaginaries of the region.

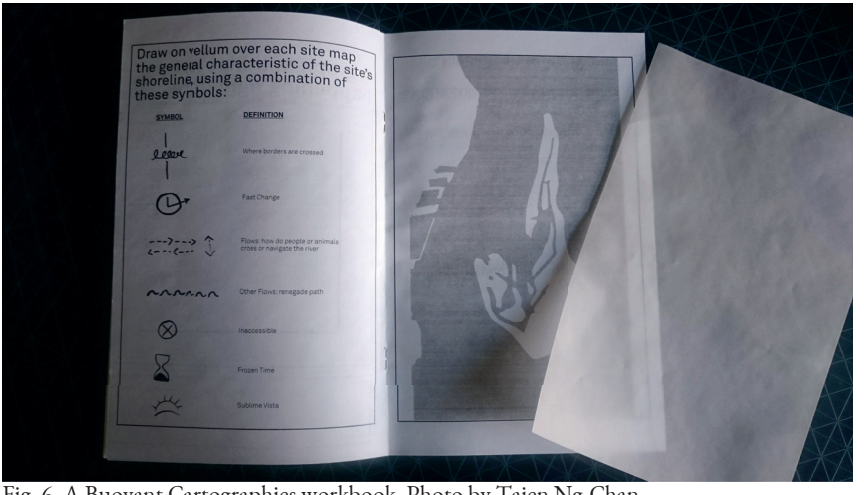

Fig. 6. A Buoyant Cartographies workbook. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan.

1. Strata-Mapping the Detroit River Border

Fig. 7. Flags were used to signal or mark points of alternative mappings or histories. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan.

¶16 One of the main activities in the Buoyant Cartographies workshop was to attempt some experimental mappings from as close to the literal Detroit-Windsor border as we could get, which was, naturally, on a sight-seeing boat cruise. This two-hour tour afforded the opportunity for some autocartographic research as well as some strata-mapping of vectors and flows, fast change, and frozen time. The tour showed clearly the places where there was money and development, and places that were "frozen in time" through nostalgic narratives laid upon the riverfront landscapes. These strata highlighted Detroit's spatial imaginary, which is legendary. As referenced by its nicknames Motor City and Motown, Detroit is well-known for its history of car factories and music, its urban blight and regeneration. The nostalgic stories associated with the Detroit-Windsor region as a whole generally refer to illegal cross-border activities such as rum-running during the era of Prohibition. My city-image consisted at that point only of the popular spatial imaginary made up of representations in the news, in Hollywood movies, and in circulating narratives of rust, ruin, and gentrification.

¶17 We began the boat cruise floating past the Detroit riverfront, while a white male tour guide with a "dad" sense of humour pointed out places of interest. Highlights of the Detroit side included stories of celebrities, from Kid Rock's house, the hotel where The Beatles stayed, a park to be named after Aretha Franklin, whose

funeral had just taken place in downtown Detroit earlier that day, to Frederick Law Olmsted who designed Belle Island (a driving park on the American side). As the boat prepared to navigate between Belle Island and Peche Island on the Canadian side, the tour guide acknowledged the performative nature of the border by asking his audience to imagine a line straight down the middle of the river. As the boat crossed this line, the Canadian jokes also began. The border manifested here as a staging of nationality, where Canadians are defined against Americans and, more specifically, against the city-image of Detroit. In contrast, Windsor was often described more generally as "Canada," with associated Canadian stereotypes, rather than as Windsor in particular, as Windsor's imageability is not strong for outsiders. Indeed, Windsor's spatial imaginary is nearly non-existent on its own, but clearly affected by Detroit and inseparable as a border region (as it happens, the second largest in the world).

Fig. 8. Workshop participants look over their notes and maps. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan.

¶18 A strong spatial imaginary can result in more places of frozen time, and vice versa: there was less frozen time to be mapped on the Windsor riverfront and no associated celebrities mentioned by the tour guide except one man—the gangster Al Capone who evidently used a Windsor church light as a signal for his rumrunners. The tour guide mentioned Canada in terms of connection rather than division: for instance, why the boat flies both countries' flags (as a sign of politeness and respect), the cross-border economy, the underground railroad, and the Detroit and Windsor Tunnel Corporation, which is owned equally by the two cities. It was noted that flags in both countries were at half-mast, likely for Aretha Franklin's funeral. The tour

was, in fact, quite informative and mainly featured narratives of cooperation and friendship to show a "fluid" view of the border, which was also manifested by the boat's trajectories on the river.

¶19 On the water, the boat can traverse the river at will, as though the border did not exist at all. The privilege of tourism can thus erase border mechanics of security entirely, demonstrated as the boat glided back and forth from along Detroit's waterfront to Windsor's, right down the middle at some points, and then back again to Detroit. The river is thus an entirely different kind of border than on land, where checkpoints, fences, and guards have hardened the imaginary line into material existence. After the events of 9/11, as Victor Konrad points out, Americans and Canadians began "reevaluating and reinventing the borderlines and borderlands that both divide and link two nation states and many nations and regions. The reimagination of the border is led inordinately by fear [...]."[40] Indeed, we felt this fear earlier in the day, since in order to get to the boat cruise in Detroit, we had crossed the American-Canadian border via Tunnel Bus, which goes under the river. This border crossing was, in contrast to the boat ride, a wholly different experience, one filled with some tension. I was more than aware of the affect of skin colour in these high surveillance border zones, as well as the privilege sustained by our passports, and the inequity of rights in general. But within the confines of a tour boat, the border does not stop passage at all, and there are no questions asked, no one judging the shapes and colours of our bodies or the validity of our stories. The tour manifests a space of flow, cooperation, and leisure, overlaid on top of the geopolitical imaginings of separation. Borderlands typically exhibit the relationships between nation-states and can be seen to "exhibit prominently the connections forged between states and the relationships sustained by localities across the border."[41]

[40] Victor Konrad, "Conflating Imagination, Identity, and Affinity in the Social Construction of Borderlands Culture Between Canada and the United States," *American Review of Canadian Studies*, vol. 42, no. 4, 2012, p. 531, https://doi.org/10.1080/02722011.2012.732096 (accessed 17 May 2020).

[41] Victor Konrad and Heather N. Nicol, "Border Culture, the Boundary Between Canada and the United States of America, and the Advancement of Borderlands Theory," *Geopolitics*, vol. 16, no. 1, 2011, p. 70, https://doi.org/10.1080/14650045.2010.493773 (accessed 17 May 2020).

Fig. 9. Hand-drawn strata-map on vellum by Taien Ng-Chan.

¶20 As a global industry, tourism is changing the world into a convenient place where the privileged Western traveller is more or less always accommodated. Edward M. Bruner points out that tourism has long been linked to colonialism (and by way of ethnography) through the same social formations and expressions of dominion. They occur at different historical periods, but are "variant forms of expansionism occupying the space opened up by extensions of power."[42] These connections between colonialism and tourism point not only to the daily flow of people, commodities, and leisure between the two countries, but also to a similar worldview of the land itself as resource and consumption—a view also developed through cartography. Maps and their relationships to imageability are thus central to the processes of place-making, as is developed in the next section: a visit to Peche Island.

[42] Edward M. Bruner, "Of Cannibals, Tourists, and Ethnographers," *Cultural Anthropology*, vol. 4, no. 4, 1989, p. 439, www.jstor.org/stable/656251 (accessed 17 May 2020).

2. Reading the Strata of Peche Island Maps

Fig. 10. Lee Rodney signals the creation of an alternative space on Peche Island. Video still by Taien Ng-Chan.

¶21 While the spatial imaginary of Detroit preceded my personal experience of it, Peche Island, on the other hand, was a specific place in the border zone that had no prior city-image for me, as is often the case with smaller locales. Thus, the opportunity presented itself as ideal to study how a city-image of place is formed. Rather than the strata-map-making that guided us on the Detroit River cruise, this portion of the workshop was more about the tourist practice of map-reading, not as a leisure activity but as a way to perceive the narratives of place. HPU was scheduled to lead the group visit to Peche Island on the final afternoon of the Buoyant Cartographies event. We began by laying out the narratives that we uncovered in our initial research, predicated on three maps, and then led a cultural landscape reading of the site itself (though this element cannot be adequately covered here).

¶22 One's first connection to a place is often through what is represented on the first few pages of an Internet search. Despite privacy concerns about the company's tracking of personal details and locations, Google continues to be the most widely used current Internet search engine. Thus, the search term "Peche Island Ontario" was my next step on the road to building my "city-image" of this particular site on the Detroit River border. A Google Map was part of the immediate results.

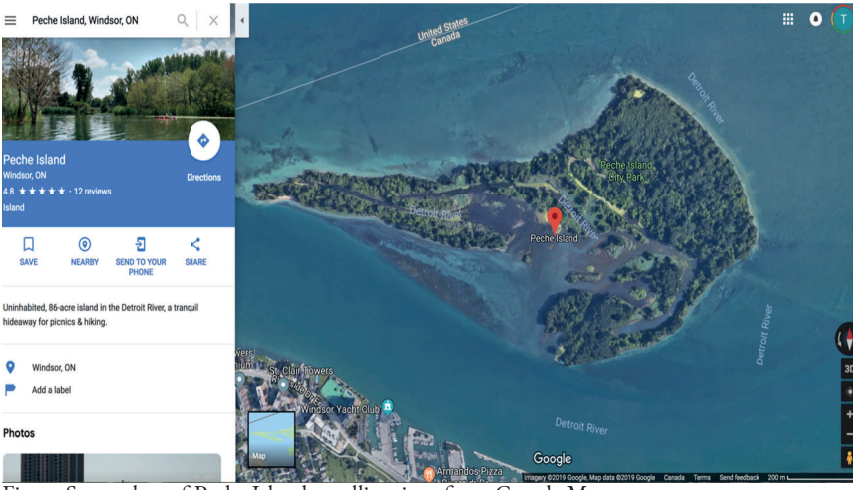

Fig. 11. Screenshot of Peche Island, satellite view, from Google Maps.

The Google Map presents the GIS layer and the satellite view (read as scientific knowledge), but also the places of consumption and leisure (flowers, pizza, yacht club). One can see the size and shape of the island, its position in the Detroit River and proximity of the border just to the north—it is a little known fact that due to a bend in the river, Detroit is actually north of Windsor and consequently at this juncture the American-Canadian border is north of Canada.

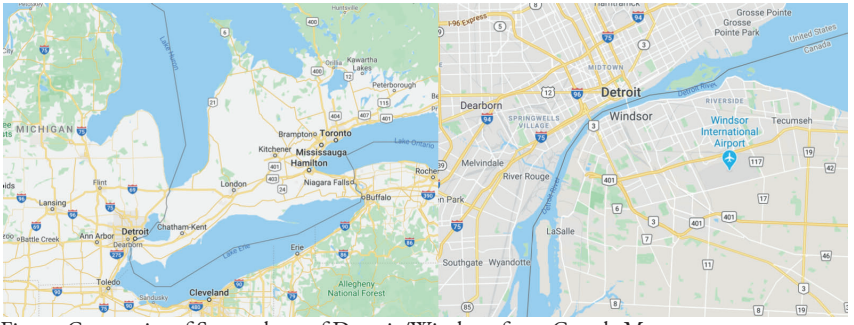

Fig. 12. Composite of Screenshots of Detroit/Windsor, from Google Maps.

This deviation from expectations in Canadian geography situates Peche Island in general feelings of disorientation for outsiders, but otherwise there is not a lot of other narrative information to be gleaned. Combined with the other search results describing the leisure amenities offered by the city park, from kayaking to boat rides, this first connection does give an initial city-image of green space and outdoor leisure. Most of the local participants

admitted to not knowing much about the site prior to this visit, other than that it was a city park.

¶23 The most interesting result in this Google search was an article in the *Walkerville Times* online, "The Curse of Peche Island,"[43] which is where we found the second map:

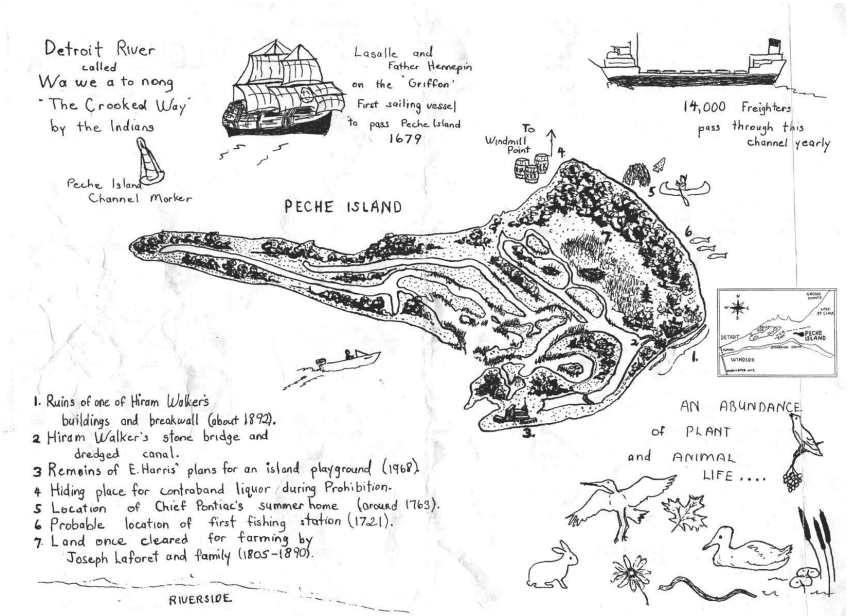

Fig. 13. Source: http://www.walkervilletimes.com/images/map-peche-island.jpg (accessed 3 May 2020)

Here, the aesthetic differences between the two maps point out the differing narratives at play, between the more "official" and consumeristic narrative of Google Maps and the informal, hand-drawn "local knowledge" espoused by the *Walkerville Times* map. It can thus be seen that maps tell different stories and hold different worldviews. The Google Map presents Peche Island as an "[u]ninhabited, 86-acre island in the Detroit River, a tranquil hideaway for picnics & hiking." The hand-drawn map reads rhetorically as personal and local, with the knowledge passed down as oral histories or settler folklore, from the inclusion of "Indians" to colonial history, to the usual Detroit-Windsor references of Prohibition, trade, and leisure.

[43] Elaine Weeks, "The Curse of Pech Island," *Walkerville Times Magazine*, http://www.walkervilletimes.com/curse-peche-island.html (accessed 17 May 2020).

¶24 Social media figures into our research on Peche Island in the form of a Facebook post made by Donna. As the Buoyant Cartographies event approached, Donna wrote that the HPU were going to visit Peche Island. Among some of the comments was this one, from our friend and colleague Jennifer Dorner:

> Oh, I know so much about that Island. Wild stories from my grandfather that sounded unbelievable, but are turning out to be true—Sarah, my sister is researching the family history. If you see the name Drouillard anywhere, I'm related.

We asked Jennifer to elaborate and received this text via direct message (DM), reproduced here with permission:

> About Peche Island—I started writing stuff out to send over, but maybe because they are passed down orally, I am struggling. Essentially, family dispute with Hiram Walker and the government, close ties with the Shawnee people, stories about Chief Tecumseh and how, when, and where he died and the connection our family had to protecting, hiding, and also moving his body. But some of that takes place in the land around Peche Island—Tecumseh and the monument... Really interesting—although maybe it's always more interesting when it's family!

And indeed, as Jennifer had mentioned, the name Drouillard figures large. Elaine Weeks, author of the *Walkerville Times* article, lays out the story about a French-Canadian family—the last couple on the island—Leon (Leo) Laforet and his wife Rosalie Drouillard (descendent of Pierre Drouillard and ancestor to Jennifer Dorner), in a dispute with the liquor baron Hiram Walker. Here are some pertinent excerpts:

> According to descendants of the French family, which once settled the island for almost 100 years, there is a good reason why Peche, or Peach Island, remains a virtual wilderness in the middle of an urban metropolis: it has a curse on it. [...]
>
> A treaty with the Indians was accomplished in 1790 for lands in the western Ontario peninsula, but it excluded Peche Island possibly because the Ottawas, Chipewas, Pottawa-tomies and Hurons who signed the treaty wished to retain the island as a fishing ground. Local businessmen possibly did not

> notice that Peche Island was not among the lands transferred to the Crown and began petitioning for grants for the land. [...]
>
> According to Laforest family legend, Jean bartered with the natives to gain ownership of the island, closing the deal with the exchange of some livestock. The Laforest family lived on the island confident of their ownership for almost 100 years. [...]
>
> Leo was the grandson of Jean Baptiste and had been born on the island in 1819. He and Rosalie, who had been born on Walpole Island and was the daughter of a Native interpreter, had 12 children, the last being born in 1880. [...]
>
> According to the Laforet descendants [note: the "s" had been added and dropped by this time], a group of Walker's men forced their way into Rosalie's home and made her and the oldest boys sign the deed over to the Walkers. [...] That winter, while Rosalie and her family were away in Detroit on business, someone came onto their property and ruined the winter stores. Because Rosalie was knowledgeable in the ways of the Natives, they were able to survive until spring. When it was time to leave, Rosalie got down on her knees and cursed the Walkers and the island. "No one will ever do anything with the island!" were her apparent words.[44]

The rest of the article details how the curse of Peche Island took hold: Willis Walker, the lawyer who handled the purchase of the island, died shortly afterwards at the young age of twenty-eight; Hiram himself, who was unsuccessfully trying to develop the place into a summer home and resort, died a few years after that. Development was then attempted by Mr. Walter E. Campbell of the Detroit and Windsor Ferry Company, who died that same year in his house on the island, which then burned to the ground. The Bob-Lo Company bought the island, it is believed, to deter development of any rivals to its Bob-Lo Island amusement park further down the river, and the island fell into ruin. After a few other business ventures were attempted, all of which came to nothing, the place was designated a provincial park, and now a park owned by the City of Windsor. Also of note was that the article began with an origin story, titled simply "The Native Legend," which recounted how Peche Island was formed from a storm thrown up by the Winds battling over a beautiful maiden, daughter of "a spirit of the Sand Mountains on the eastern coast of Lake Michigan."

[44] Weeks, "The Curse of Peche Island."

These stories illustrate the island's shifting status, common in border zones, as use and ownership of the island moved back and forth between various peoples and nations.

¶25 The *Walkerville Times*' account of the Peche Island curse is a colourful and memorable narrative layer. I reproduce sections of it at length here because its influence is substantial—other articles that mention the history of the area (Walkerville is now a neighbourhood in Windsor) refer, in fact, to this very same article, while a CBC News story interviews Elaine Weeks, the author, in a piece called "Whisky Barons, a Family Curse and Visits from Al Capone All Part of Walkerville's Colourful Past."[45] There is also a blog called *nailhed*, devoted to explorations of Michigan and surrounding areas, where the tale of Peche Island's curse is retold in greater length, again referencing Weeks along with other sources. Here, the author of *nailhed* provides more details both to the Native origin story and to historical Indigenous activity on the island:

> More than one old book says Peche Island was Chief Pontiac's favorite summer home. *Landmarks of Wayne County and Detroit* says that in spring of 1763 the island was a "center of great activity," as the chief built his alliances with other tribes and sent runners far and wide to collect reconnaissance on the many British frontier forts of the Great Lakes region with intent to simultaneously overthrow them all.[46]

The comments to this blog provide a glimpse into the network of relations in the area, via many descendants of the Laforets/Drouillards who mention hearing the story of the curse from family members. This relates back to our initial encounter of these stories through social media networks from Jennifer Dorner, and shows how the narratives have great impact on imageability of place. There is clearly much oral history that could be drawn upon here; however, outsiders to this area would not have heard of these stories except for articles on the Internet, which basically tell a single narrative. The fact that the oral history and folklore surrounding Peche Island

[45] Stacey Janzer, "Whisky Barons, a Family Curse and Visits from Al Capone All Part of Walkerville's Colourful Past," *CBC News*, 27 October 2017, https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/windsor/history-of-walkerville-1.4373263 (accessed 17 May 2020).

[46] "Forbidden Fruit: The Curse of Peche Island," *nailhed*, September 2011, https://www.nailhed.com/2014/09/forbidden-fruit-curse-of-peche-island.html (accessed 17 May 2020).

is now digital and networked allows us a glimpse of the site as complicated beyond its current incarnation as a city park, and shows its status as a liminal border space. The story gives the place some depth of meaning and enhances its city-image.

¶26 On the other hand, places need to have a multiplicity of narrative; what was missing from the single narrative here? Despite the inclusion of the "Native Legend," the "local" point of view in all of the Internet retellings is very clearly from a colonialist history and a settler's perspective (and arguably, the inclusion of "Native Legend" can also be seen as a settler's mythologizing a people as always being in the distant past). Looking more closely at the *Walkerville Times* main article—since it provides the dominant narrative running through the first six pages of search results on Google, it thus lends itself to some analysis—one can also see where other stories and perspectives might be told. Sentences such as "Local businessmen possibly did not notice that Peche Island was not among the lands transferred to the Crown" point to fissures in the colonial narrative that could be revised to state that Peche Island is unceded territory (as the treaty did not include Peche Island), and is therefore stolen land. There are traces of Indigenous knowledge found throughout the folklore, for instance, of Rosalie Drouillard surviving off the land using "the ways of the Natives," which is passed over. There are also associations between Rosalie's power to curse and her closeness to Native ways, similar to the popular trope of "Indian curses" in the horror genre, which furthers the analysis by including cinema and fiction.

¶27 This single narrative was from a deliberately limited Google search for "Peche Island, Ontario," in an attempt to trace the forming of a subjective and fairly narrow city-image. Naturally, with further research, there is a wealth of information that can be found leading to a multiplicity of narratives and a fuller city-image. Using other search terms, for instance, "Tecumseh" as suggested by Jennifer Dorner's original Facebook message, hints at further mysteries concerning Chief Tecumseh's final burial place, and other stories. However, my main goal here was to explore how a city-image is often first developed online, resulting in the uncovering of this main narrative as the dominant layer.

¶28 The third map in this analysis was found on Peche Island itself, during the afternoon of the HPU walk. After the boat ride over to the site and an initial look around, we began our workshop by laying out its history and folklore, including Jennifer Dorner's message, which, much like an urban legend, helped validate the story of the curse. Knowing someone who is directly related to the events gave the

legend more weight. Participants agreed that these stories lent an air of "creepiness" or "mystery" to the island. Some commented on how the tunnels of foliage over the trail—seemingly a landscaped feature—contributed to this feeling. We then walked to the ruins of Hiram Walker's summer house, where we found the third map posted on this sign:

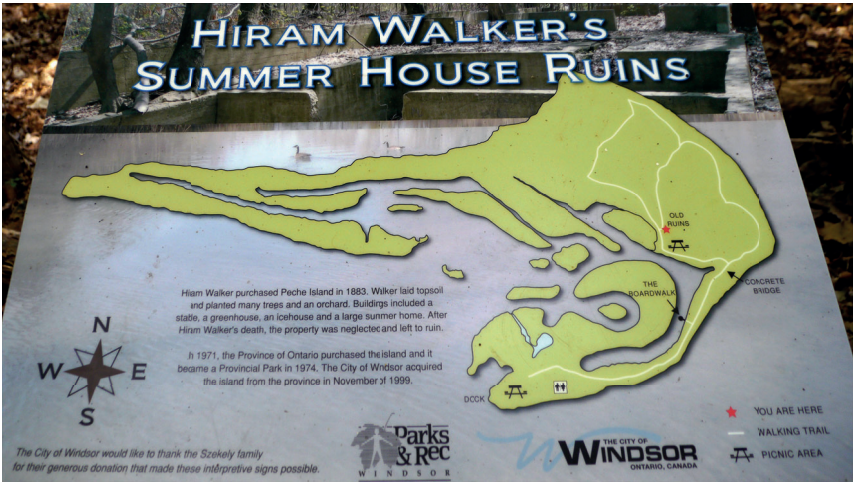

Fig. 14. Hiram Walker's Summer House Ruins sign. Photo by Taien Ng-Chan.

The very fact of there being "ruins" is a compelling feature that complicates the site beyond leisure, as it makes visible the historical strata of the place. The association with Hiram Walker in the signage immediately connects Peche Island to the spatial imaginary of Detroit-Windsor through the alcohol industry (noting that the Hiram Walker factory is very close by in Windsor), and hence, Prohibition. However, none of the folklore narratives or Indigenous histories are alluded to here at all—What of Chief Pontiac? What of the LaForets?—leaving the landmark stripped of the local meanings that give it so much interest, though certainly traces remain if one knows the stories (for instance, Hiram Walker's death is mentioned, which reminded us of the curse). It might not be the place of a city map/sign to carry oral history and folklore, but there certainly could be creative interventions to acknowledge the other highly imageable and meaningful events that occurred there, particularly from an Indigenous viewpoint.

¶29 In all these maps, we see the reduction and/or complete erasure of Indigenous perspectives and knowledge. Even in the *Walkerville Times* map, with its knowledge of local history, a clear colonial view persists. How can we "unsettle" these settler

colonialist histories as well as the "official" narratives, all of which here overtake Peche Island in a way that reduces Indigeneity to the past, to folklore and legend, or to complete non-existence rather than presence? For outsiders, as well as for locals who are settlers, it is this alternative knowledge that is lacking in both online and onsite representations and tourist information, which is linked to the spatial imaginary. To see this erasure and the possibilities to address it can be an opening towards a project of delinking from colonial imaginaries.

Conclusion and Thoughts for Future Research

¶30 The transborder community of Detroit-Windsor is not formally acknowledged as such by either country's government, but many histories are shared here, including environmental degradation, slavery, and war alongside the more commonly imagined links of industry, leisure, and alcohol. The results of our activities suggest an alternative imaginary of the Detroit River as a multilayered zone that connects various borders, not just one; where vectors converge through cultural and environmental relationships—a hub of relations that pass through and continue on. Experimental mapping methodologies can mitigate political spaces such as borderlands by drawing attention to how spatial meaning is made, and how local and Indigenous forms of knowledge can be found and presented, or erased. These are preliminary results from a single workshop and fairly minimal online research, but the event presented the perfect opportunity to study how the city-image of a place is formed in today's networked and interconnected world.

¶31 Walter Mignolo suggests that the "*exteriority* of the modern and the postmodern" is a "*border space*" where Western knowledge and subjectivity (the "horizon of expectations") have been in contact with "other languages, memories, principles of knowledge and belief, forms of government and economic organization."[47] This border zone is where each space of the other can connect through common "relations of domination and exploitation within Western knowledge."[48] He is not speaking of the spatial border zone that comprises the riverfronts of Detroit and Windsor, but his conception of "critical border thinking" is useful in this liminal space and place. Critical border thinking is "the method that

[47] Mignolo, p. 497, italics in the original.
[48] *Ibid*.

connects pluri-versality (different colonial histories entangled with imperial modernity) into a uni-versal project of delinking from modern rationality and building other possible worlds."[49] Part of the project of delinking is "to provincialize Europe," to show the hegemonic colonialist project as one knowledge out of many, rather than a "universal" and natural frame by which to interpret, judge, and conceptualize all others. As Mignolo notes, "For decolonization to be fully operative, we must create *alternatives to modernity and neo-liberal civilization.*"[50]

¶32 Artists are in a good position to provide alternative knowledge and narratives that highlight the difference between other "spaces of experience" and "the horizon of expectations" in creative terms. As artist-researchers, the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit aims to create performative events that focus on mapping-as-process, so that the experiences and relations formed may somehow carry further iterations and new spatial and subjective knowledge. The Buoyant Cartographies workshop on the Detroit River showed that borders can be fluid, and in more ways than one. Experimental mappings can provide other imaginings, where the river is a conduit that facilitates the movement of people and goods between two land masses and an important cultural district for hybrid identities, practices, and stories. This hints at further possibilities. For instance, is it possible to acknowledge that the Indigenous and French settlements previously had very different ways of understanding the land, where the river is not a barrier or a demarcation of national territory in the way that it is today? Can alternate views be worked into the Detroit-Windsor spatial imaginary in order to provoke the narrative of the border beyond fast change and frozen time? Deeper creative research needs to be done that can open up status quo narratives, and might follow the examples of The Decolonial Atlas,[51] a website that presents Indigenous and alternate cartographies, and the Ogimaa Mikana Project,[52] which highlights the importance of naming with visible acts of Indigenous intervention into

[49] *Ibid*., p. 498.

[50] *Ibid*., p. 492, italics in the original.

[51] *The Decolonial Atlas* "is a growing collection of maps which, in some way, help us to challenge our relationships with the land, people, and state. It's based on the premise that cartography is not as objective as we're made to believe." https://decolonialatlas.wordpress.com/ (accessed 17 May 2020).

[52] *Ogimaa Mikana: Reclaiming/Renaming*: "The Ogimaa Mikana Project is an effort to restore Anishinaabemowin place-names to the streets, avenues, roads, paths, and trails of Gichi Kiiwenging (Toronto)—transforming a landscape that often obscures or makes invisible the presence of Indigenous peoples." http://ogimaamikana.tumblr.com/ (accessed 17 May 2020).

Toronto street signs. Only when the spatial imaginary has included and prioritized alternate ways of sensing and knowing might there truly be active change.

Strata-Mapping the Detroit River Border with the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit

Taien Ng-Chan, York University

ABSTRACT

The Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (HPU)'s strata-mapping framework is an experimental research-creation practice that focuses on how spatial meaning is created through a performative "stratigraphic" sensing and researching of a site. The international border between Detroit, Michigan and Windsor, Ontario makes an especially compelling site for experimental cartographies in light of the conflicts over borders and walls in the current political environment. At the southernmost tip of the Great Lakes system, we focused our attention on this river border as a material site and geopolitical space: it enabled us to investigate alternate possibilities for sensing and envisioning the layered and conjoined histories of this fluid space. The Ojibwe name for this location is waawiiatanong ziibi, "where the river bends," suggesting a radically different spatial imaginary than the divided space that has been established through colonial and national histories. Experimental cartographies can thus help to develop alternate ways of experiencing such sites, an initial step towards decolonizing the spatial imaginary through a project of delinking. In September 2018, we conducted a workshop entitled Buoyant Cartographies, focusing on a performative and intermedial investigation into spatial meanings and their construction on Peche Island, which sits in the middle of the Detroit River. This was one of three Detroit River sites investigated in the workshop, with contributions from workshop organizers and HPU co-conspirator Donna Akrey.

RÉSUMÉ

Le « strata-mapping » au cœur de la Hamilton Perambulatory Unit (HPU) est une pratique expérimentale de recherche-création se concentrant sur la manière dont la signification d'un espace est créée par le biais de sensations et de recherches « stratographiques » performatives autour d'un lieu. La frontière internationale entre Detroit, le Michigan et Windsor (Ontario) fait de ce site un lieu particulièrement intéressant pour les cartographies expérimentales, compte tenu des conflits entourant les questions de frontières et de murs dans l'espace politique actuel. À l'extrémité sud des Grands Lacs, nous avons concentré notre attention sur cette frontière fluviale en tant que site matériel et espace géopolitique : elle nous a permis d'étudier d'autres possibilités de ressentir et de visualiser les diverses couches d'histoires, superposées et conjointes, de cet espace fluide. Le nom ojibwé de ce lieu est *waawiiatanong ziibi*, « là où la rivière coule », ce qui suggère un imaginaire spatial radicalement différent de

l'espace divisé qui a été établi à travers les histoires coloniale et nationale. Les cartographies expérimentales peuvent ainsi aider à développer des manières alternatives de vivre ces sites, une première étape vers la décolonisation des imaginaires spatiaux à travers un projet de déconnexion. En septembre 2018, nous avons mené un atelier intitulé *Cartographies flottantes*, lors duquel nous nous sommes lancées dans une investigation performative et intermédiale des significations spatiales et de leur construction sur Peche Island, située au milieu de la rivière Detroit. Il s'agissait de l'un des trois sites de la rivière Detroit étudiés lors de cet atelier, avec la contribution des organisateurs de l'atelier et de la co-conspiratrice du HPU, Donna Akrey.

BIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

Taien Ng-Chan is a Hamilton-based writer, researcher, and media artist whose work blends hybrid forms of experimental cinema, photography, poetry, and processes of mapping. In addition to her scholarly work in such publications as *Wi: Journal of Mobile Media* and *Humanities*, she has contributed book chapters to *Mobility and Locative Media* (2014) and *What Is Our Role? Artists in Academia and the Post-Knowledge Economy* (2018), and others. Taien has also published four books and anthologies of creative writing, produced multimedia arts websites, and written for stage, screen, and CBC Radio; her media works have been exhibited in film festivals and galleries across Canada and internationally. She is a founding member of the Hamilton Perambulatory Unit and an assistant professor of media arts at York University. More information on her projects can be found at her website: soyfishmedia.com.