

Urbanization as Aporia, Kelowna as Hiatus:  
Geographical Imaginaries and Political Limits of an Urban World

by

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BA, University of Victoria, 2000  
MA, University of Victoria, 2006

A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment  
of the Requirements for the Degree of

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in the Department of Political Science

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## **Supervisory Committee**

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Dr. Warren Magnusson, (Department of Political Science)  
**Departmental Member**

Dr. Evelyn Cobley, (Department of English)  
**Outside Member**

## Abstract

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My dissertation questions contemporary accounts of a transition from modern to global urbanization, as embedded in urban geography literature and in popular debates, policies, and urban planning practices in Kelowna, British Columbia, Canada. The dominant transition narrative argues that there has been a shift from forms of modern urbanization (localized, state-based transitions from rural to urban) to emergent and uncertain forms of global, even planetary, urbanization: that we live, for the first time in human history, in an urban world. These accounts claim, ultimately, that the spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices or experiences of urbanization have changed irrevocably, and that politics is changing with it. In other words, they offer what I call transition metanarratives of the spatiotemporality, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology of both urbanization and politics. Despite these claims of radical transformations in urbanization and politics, the geographic and political imaginaries in these accounts rely on boundary practices that invoke distinctively modern arrangements. The patterns of progress and return that these boundary practices generate are characteristic of the aporia. An aporia is a line that, in the process of being drawn, simultaneously constitutes entities, categories, or concepts as mutually incompatible and jointly necessary (Derrida 1993). These entities can take the form of a traditional binary (rural/urban; nature/culture; local/global; whiteness/other), or of a presence and its limit (this body/that body; community/lack of community), or of what might be called the boundaries of authorization (spacetime, ontology, epistemology, phenomenology). In all cases, aporetic boundaries create inherently unstable relations that Foucault (2002: 371) characterizes as the “hiatus between the ‘and,’” the spatial gap and temporal pause within the dynamic of determination and redetermination. The instability of the aporetic hiatus generates a desire for sovereign security, even as it ensures that sovereignty is an impossible dream. My dissertation interprets development

proposals and community plans in Kelowna as expressions of these patterns of aporetic boundary generation, degeneration, and regeneration. In the midst of this encounter with seemingly over-determined limits, the aporetic hiatus offers a productive site of under-determination, where the drive for the sovereign capacity to decide and determine is held, temporarily at least, in abeyance. I use local aesthetic productions – the ‘revitalization’ of the downtown main street; an artist’s residency/installation piece – to engage the hiatus as a site where the vulnerability of aporetic boundaries can be experienced not as threat but as possibility. Rather than a determinative politics of the alternative, the transition, or the escape, which reproduces dominant modern geographical and political boundaries as authoritative and inescapable, this aporetic hiatus opens modes of engaging with the unstable boundaries of politics, without the panicked return to sovereign decision-making.

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## Dedication

This dissertation is, in the deepest sense, a work of love. I feel so fortunate to be able to dedicate so much time to something I love, and this good fortune has been made possible by the love of people around me. I thank my family and friends for this support. Particularly, I thank my parents, Lynda and Bruno Tedesco, and my sisters, Kelly and Lisa, for their humour, their wisdom, their clear words, and their push to get away from the desk and get the body moving. And I thank my oldest friend, Crystal Przybille, whose conversation and artistic practice is a continual source of idea and inspiration.

My family is much bigger than when I started this work, now centred on my husband, Cameron, and my twin boys, Nicholas and Thomas. I thank Cam for his love, expressed in word and deed, in his hard work to build a home and a life for us, and in his belief in my capacity to do this work. Now, as a parent, this work becomes an expression of love for my family, and of the desire to understand the world I have brought my children into, in hopes of stretching it into the form of world that will have space for their boundless energy, enthusiasm, and love.

Most of all, I dedicate this work to my mother, a truly beautiful person, as her name suggests. Her last written word was, simply, love, repeated again and again. A parting gift, and lasting challenge. This work is infused with that commitment to love.

# **BEGIN AGAIN, RETURN AGAIN I: The Transition Narratives and Political Continuities of Global Urbanization**

## **Approaching Kelowna**

You can approach the Okanagan Valley, in the southern interior of British Columbia, from several directions. Driving from Vancouver, the closest major city, you will travel approximately 400 kilometres to the north-east, through the steep, damp green mountains of the coast range, through either the steep, grey gorge of the Fraser River Valley and the Lillooet Mountain Range or the steep, grey granite peaks of the Coquihalla summit, and down into the wide open grasslands of Merritt, in the Nicola Valley. From the Nicola Valley you can climb back into high rangeland and forests and descend far too quickly into the very heart of the Okanagan Valley, taking a sharp curve that brings the long narrow flash of Okanagan Lake and the long flat spread of the City of Kelowna into view. This is the centre of the valley, where the lake narrows and bends along the jut of rocky crags that is Okanagan Mountain Park. In the summer of 2003, this park became known across Canada as the site of a forest fire that evacuated 27,000 people, burned 25,000 hectares<sup>1</sup> of forest and park land, and destroyed 239 houses on the southern fringe of the city. This narrow bend in the lake is the only place where you can cross by car, on the floating bridge that connects the west side – including the historic town centre of Westbank, the growing district of West Kelowna, and the extensive reserve lands and commercial developments of the Westbank First Nation (WFN)<sup>2</sup> – to Kelowna on the east shore. You can choose to skirt the punishing summit climb into the central Okanagan by traveling north from Merritt, along flat grassy plains until you reach Kamloops, another low, dusty city, extending horizontally out from the banks of the Thompson River. A north-east turn from Kamloops will take you to Chase, Sorrento, and

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<sup>1</sup> All areas of significant size will be given in hectares, as the standard metric measurement. Measures of real estate lots will be given in acres, as this is evidently the industry standard. Measurements contained within quotes will be left in their original form. The conversion from hectare to acre is 1 ha = 2.47 acre, or 1 acre = 0.40 ha.

<sup>2</sup> [www.wfn.ca](http://www.wfn.ca)

Salmon Arm – greener, more wooded communities at the northern limit of the Okanagan Valley – while a south-east turn will take you through Monte Lake, past the giant Canada flag on the hill north of Falkland, and into the small North Okanagan city of Vernon. From Vancouver you can also choose to travel due east, through the dense green-black of Manning Provincial Park, up and down into the parched little town of Princeton, and then along the Similkameen River – stopping always in the height of summer to swim in the clear waters at Bromley Rock – until you arrive into the steep scree slopes, rolling green farms and orchards, and golden grassy hillsides of the South Okanagan and the communities of Keremeos, Oliver, Osoyoos, Okanagan Falls, and Penticton.

If you were driving from Calgary, you would strike a sharply south-west diagonal, brake constantly through the winding descent into Golden, find Rogers Pass a surprising cut through the year-round white peaks of the Rocky Mountains, and then slowly watch the mountains melt into hills, the hills melt into slopes, the slopes melt into the octopus arms and dark waters of Shuswap Lake. You would pass Sicamous, the green fields and lazy river eddies of Grindrod, and the Starlight Drive-In in Enderby, the last drive-in movie theatre in the Okanagan. Finally, about six hours from Calgary, you arrive in Vernon, whose drive-in movie theatre has long-since been redeveloped as a retirement community. Although small, Vernon is the main city of the North Okanagan Regional District. It sits nestled in a surround of hills, between the northern tip of Okanagan Lake on the west, brilliant blue-green Kalamalka Lake on the south, and the misleadingly beautifully named Swan Lake on the north.

Less common is the approach from the Kootenays, a slow circuitous route where you leave narrow treed valleys and quiet communities, travel north to the natural hotspots of Nakusp, and curve back south to the cable ferry that crosses Lower Arrow Lake. On the west side of the lake you turn north until you reach Cherryville, then due west through the Monashee Mountains, until you reach Lumby, Lavington, and finally Vernon. This narrow winding highway should be driven carefully at night, when there are often deer on the road.

Of course, you can arrive on flights that carry you over the mountain passes, ranch land, and forests – forests once plentiful, but visibly decreasing due to logging and the red stain of the pine beetle. The major hub is Kelowna Airport, but more and more

flights connect Vernon and Penticton to other cities throughout the province and western Canada. Once out-of-the-way, a quiet agricultural region, the valley is increasingly linked by smooth, wide highways to major cities throughout western Canada, and by frequent flights to cities across North America and beyond.

### **The land and the Syilx**

This valley and the 111 kilometre-long lake that fills it is named Okanagan after the First Nations who called the region *S-Ookanhkchinx*, which translates from the Syilx language into “transport toward the head or top end.” The Okanagan Nation Alliance<sup>3</sup> describes this as a reference to the traditional territory of the Okanagan Nations: they traveled the waterways from the north end of Okanagan Lake at what is now Vernon, past the sharp bend at what is now Kelowna, to the south end of the lake at Penticton. They followed the Okanagan River as it flows south from Penticton, through Okanagan Falls, and down to Brewster, Washington, USA, where it merges with the Columbia River (Armstrong and Hall 2007). The Syilx people have lived in this valley, extending north to south past modern state boundaries, since time immemorial. They are one of the numerous Salishan tribes in the interior plateau and interior Columbia River basin regions. The word “Syilx” takes its meaning “from several different images. ...[that capture a command] for every individual [strand] to be part of that stranded unified group, and to continue that twisting and unification on a continuous basis. It is an important concept which underlies our consideration of the meanings of aboriginal title and rights.”<sup>4</sup> While modern, Western modes of analysis might state that “[t]he complex traditional economy of the Interior Plateau involved seasonal hunting, fishing and gathering, and trading with other families or tribes to obtain a range of products” (Thomson 1994: 96), the relationship of the Syilx people to their land and resources was, and still is, organized through Indigenous world views and priorities. The four traditional food chiefs, representative of the four types of food harvested, guided social, cultural, and political practices across reciprocal spheres of human and non-human relations (Armstrong and Grauer 2008: 7). Chief Spitlem (Bitterroot, and all plants below the

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<sup>3</sup> [www.syilx.org](http://www.syilx.org)

<sup>4</sup> <http://www.syilx.org/who-we-are/the-syilx-people/>

earth), and Chief Siya (Saskatoon berry, and all plants above the earth), are “the two female chiefs that sustain” the Syilx people, while Chief Ntitiyix (Spring Salmon, and all things in the water) and Chief Skmxist (Blackbear, and all animals on land), are the two male chiefs (Armstrong and Grauer 2008: 7-9). Knowledge of how to be Syilx on the land were passed down orally through *captikwł*, or the stories that contain both “essential specific environmental knowledge” and “the ethos of interdependency specific to the ecology of the Syilx Okanagan territory through reenactment of nature’s interactions” (Armstrong 2010: 1-2). Through the intergenerational knowledge transfer that *captikwł* enabled, the Syilx prospered in the Okanagan territory.

The extended valley of the Okanagan territory is a unique region in Canada. Its semi-arid geographic and climatic conditions give the region hot dry summers and moderately cold, snowy winters. It is both distinctively rich and incredibly sensitive: it contains dry valleys, riparian lowlands, grassy highlands and mountains, and more biodiversity than any other region in Canada; and it also contains the most endangered, threatened, and rare species in the province (Hessing 2010/2011: 121, 130). But such a description is drier than the climate, and does nothing to enable an encounter with this place.

The long, narrow valley and its surrounding highlands have several large freshwater lakes and a few smaller streams, grasslands of bluebunch wheatgrass with sage, rabbit-bush and antelope-bush, and hillsides treed mainly with Ponderosa pines, as dry and open as the landscape itself. In the spring, these hillsides are covered in the rich gold blooms of the Balsam Root flower, whose ochre centres smell of synthetic hot chocolate powder, and the bluey-lavender spikes of wild lupines. This is the time to be wary of ticks in the grass, which embed themselves under your skin and carry the risk of Lyme’s disease. Later, the hillsides will be covered with the sweet white blooms of the Saskatoon bushes, which as the summer progresses yield deep indigo berries, gamey and mealy compared to blueberries. As the summer temperatures climb to forty degrees Celsius, the greenery retreats and gives way to sage and tumble weeds, to the nasty barbed heads of Russian Nettle that tear at bare skin, and to the small hidden clusters of Prickly Pear cactus whose spikes are easily embedded in misplaced hands or feet. This is the time to be wary of rattlesnakes, sunning themselves on the same rocks or unused

backroads that you are likely to walk or bike along. Their bite is poisonous, painful but rarely fatal for adults.

Late summer brings a golden glow to the valley, as the sun hangs lower in the sky and shines sideways through blades of ripening grass. In the hills, the dirt reduces to a fine dust and the Ponderosa pine needles bake in the endless sun. The mullein spikes, tall as your eyes, are spent and drying. The leaves of willows, aspen, and cottonwood turn golden and begin to dry. As the days go by and the wild berries ripen, it is important to watch for bears, who come down out of the hills to fatten before winter.

During winter, clouds settle into the groove of the valley, holding a low grey cover for days on end. The particular geography of the long lake enclosed by hills and squat mountains creates a thermal inversion that keeps moisture trapped in the valley. Look north to south, and the clouds have engulfed the world, a stratus affliction that seems a contemporary version of the biblical forty days of rain. Travel a few minutes on any road that leads east or west out of the valley, or drive high enough into the surrounding hills, and you will be released into glorious blue sunshine once again. The hillsides receive intermittent covers of snow until late in the winter, when the blanket settles in earnest. Snowshoeing or cross-country skiing, you will see lodgepole pine, spruce, and Douglas fir trees weighed down by snow to narrow spikes. The deciduous trees and bushes – Saskatoon bushes, trembling aspen, and paper birch – form grey lacy silhouettes against the low-lying light, and the last remaining berries and shoots provide winter foraging for such birds as Clark’s Nutcracker and the Pygmy Nuthatch, for White-tailed and Mule deer, and for coyote.

The first spread of non-Indigenous pioneers into this valley occurred in the mid-1800s, and the first permanent non-Indigenous settlement, in 1859, was a French mission established by Oblate minister Father Charles Marie Pandosy. Later, significant numbers of British settlers began to establish large cattle ranches, taking advantage of the natural grasslands. Fruit trees were planted initially to support ranch owners and staff but by the 1860s some pioneers were planting orchards as a primary focus. The first irrigated orchard was constructed in the 1880s near Peachland, south of Kelowna. By the early 1900s, the Okanagan nations were displaced onto government-delineated reserves, though no treaties were ever signed. The culture and economy of the valley became

increasingly connected to the farms, ranches, and orchards that the settlers cultivated. This history is celebrated in an ode to pioneers that was erected in 2003 at the lookout on the summit of Knox Mountain Park in Kelowna. The plaque briefly references the Indigenous inhabitants, and then moves quickly to laud the hard work of the pioneers, especially the often-unrecognized pioneer women, whose efforts made the valley region “livable.” From this lookout, part of a 235 hectare park of Ponderosa pine forest and grassland, you can look south over Kelowna, across the lake to West Kelowna and Westside Road, north along the lake, and south-east to the satellite communities of Rutland, Mission, Crawford, and others. The signs of a working landscape are plentiful, from the log booms on the lake at the base of Knox Mountain, to the artificially green stretches of irrigated fields and orchards, to the snaking lines of vineyards following the south-facing hillside curves. While you cannot see them from this distance, many of the seemingly barren hillsides are traced with old, disused irrigation flumes, now over-grown with moss and plants and used mainly as walking trails; these early irrigation efforts were essential to transforming the uniformly dry environment into the agricultural landscape that is now synonymous with the Okanagan. While orchards are still an important, even iconic, industry within the Okanagan, over the past century the economy of the valley has become more diversified. Major industrial sectors include forestry and construction, and with the growing population base, the public sector provides employment to many. Vineyards have become a second high-value agricultural undertaking, with Okanagan Valley wines winning awards world-wide. The enormous increase in tourism over the past 50 years has made the service industry another crucial source of economic income and employment.

Increasingly, the Okanagan Valley has become popular not only for its agricultural production and economic opportunities, but for the elusive “quality of life” that the climate and geography provides. The region offers a mix of cultural amenities, long hours of summer sunshine and predictable winter snow that make outdoor activities possible year-round, and a local economy varied enough to hold the prospects of work for many. The region is desirable enough to have spawned a phenomenon known locally as the “sunshine tax,” referring to the lower wages people are willing to accept to live in this climate and landscape. Young families come from Greater Vancouver, Calgary, and other

urban centres for the possibility of owning larger houses on private lots in an environment perceived to be more safe and natural, spurring the growth of single-family dwellings that spread out further and further from city centres. Retirees come for the milder climate and smaller cities, spurring the growth of adult-only communities and golf courses, often as combined, sprawling developments. Such is the desirability of life in the Okanagan that advertisements for real estate and development opportunities in the valley can be found in the newspapers of major cities throughout western Canada, including full-page ads in the main section of the B.C. edition of *The Globe and Mail*. These ads emphasize the beautiful lakes and hillsides, the perfect summer weather, the year-round recreational activities, and the proximity via road and air to other urban centres.

### **Urbanization as geographic and political imaginaries**

This brief account of Kelowna's urbanization repeats the dominant modern narrative of a transition from rural community to mid-sized city. It repeats the standard boundaries that have defined urbanization as a Western process of modernization and industrialization, boundaries such as rural and urban, nature and culture, human and non-human, city and state, unity and diversity, and past and modern, modern and future. It also repeats, more implicitly, a set of boundaries that have been used to restrict the recognition of urbanization to those manifestations that seem appropriately Western, to impose the expectation of Western urbanization on peoples and places with their own modes of constituting and interacting with a social and built environment, and to extend the impact of the joint modern project of urbanization and colonization: boundaries such as civilized and savage, Western and other. Finally, it evokes temporal and spatio-material boundaries, such as permanent and temporary, solid and ephemeral, that display underlying concerns with urbanization as a complex, dynamic range of phenomena that simultaneously seem to promise something better and threaten what is familiar. Whether directly or indirectly, these common boundaries have been used, in narratives of urbanization, to define the possibilities and limits of people in space, place, and time.

Increasingly, the speed and geographic spread of contemporary urbanization has generated a growing sense that these modern boundaries defining people in place are uncertain, and potentially irrelevant. As urbanization has apparently become global, focus

has shifted from accounts of rural/urban transformation to the emerging problems of contemporary global urbanization. Increasingly, Kelowna is understood as operating within this global restructuring of the processes of urbanization, particularly through neoliberal models of “place-making” as a global competitive strategy. This is not to say that contemporary urbanization has finally transformed Kelowna into a place of urban complexity or multiplicity, a linear transition narrative that erases prior productions of this place. Rather, Kelowna encompasses the Syilx people, a French-Canadian missionary settlement, a rural British orcharding community, and a growing city of shiny glass, all on unceded Indigenous land. There is no consistent experience, here, of rural-ness or city-ness, privilege or poverty, and Western-ness or otherness. Kelowna seems to be a perfect example of urbanization as transition and many incompatible places and times at once: an Indigenous nation, a colonial settlement, a modern city, a neoliberal creative city, and a place of non-sovereign global urbanism (Magnusson 2011a). This uncertainty – in understanding Kelowna, and in understanding global urbanization as a spatially and geographically diffused set of phenomena – manifests in two contradictory tendencies. On the one hand, it leads to new transition narratives and the search for new imaginaries of the possibilities and limits of urbanization; on the other hand, it manifests as a return to modern boundaries, specifically in attempts to balance perceived imbalances, to mitigate threats, or to mourn what has been lost. This seemingly incompatible set of dynamics – the transition narratives with their future-momentum and the returns to modern boundaries thought to be made vestigial by the transitions of urbanization – has powerful effects for contemporary geographic and political imaginaries, as the four essays in this work trace, through rather than against the complicated dynamics at play.

The dominant narrative of urbanization displays inconsistencies and irrelevancies, yet it displays a consistently dominant framing according to largely *geographic* imaginaries of space, place, and time, whether specifically modern imaginaries or uncertain, emergent ones. These dominant geographic imaginaries are both developed and critiqued, particularly but not exclusively, within the discipline of urban geography, an approach to the study of urbanization that the first substantive essay engages (‘Urbanization out of Context’). However, these imaginaries are also developed and

critiqued within popular venues and everyday practices in specific, if increasingly uncertain, places, including community planning processes, development proposals, local media, and popular venues. The second substantive essay ('Urbanization in Context') engages the dominant imaginaries and practices of spatial and temporal emplacement and definition as they currently take place in Kelowna. This attention to Kelowna highlights that the broader geographic transition narratives of urbanization are responding to generalized uncertainty about how contemporary global urbanization is transforming imaginaries of people in space, place, and time. The transition narratives are struggling to fill perceived voids of what is now, and what comes next, in common understandings of the constitution and emplacement of human being and human community.

However, these ostensibly geographic transition narratives of Kelowna's urbanization also assume a familiar, if implicit, set of *political imaginaries*: capitalism, imperialism, sociological pressures, governance through formal levels of government informal economic processes, and claims about the potential alternatives of immanent community practices. In particular, this account of urbanization and development has been understood as 'political' in that it has attempted to propose a mode or site of solution to a range of perceived problems of communal life, through established arenas such as government policy and urban planning. The popular contemporary planning models of Smart Growth and New Urbanism – two distinct approaches that share a desire to find a sustainable balance between rural and urban – have their roots in critical analyses of urban development by Jane Jacobs and others in the mid-twentieth century. In turn, these mid-century analyses belong to an even older history of idealizations of renewed nature/urban relationships, from Ebenezer Howard's Garden Cities of Victorian England (Gandy 2006), back through the development of urban roadways and parks according to newly-discovered models of the circulation of blood through veins and oxygen to the lungs (Swyngedouw 2006), right to the implementation in urban architecture of idealized notions of the natural human form in ancient Greece (Sennett 1994). The transition narratives of urbanization characterize the troubling capacity of urbanization to simultaneously define and upend the dominant boundaries of people in place, space, and time: rural and urban, nature and culture, human and non-human, and so on. However, it is precisely the tension between the clarity and confusion of these

boundaries that generates the imaginary of a correct form of urbanization being necessary to resecure boundaries of political life made uncertain by the dynamism of urbanization itself. Thus in addition to the dominant geographical imaginaries of urbanization, there are pervasive boundaries less commonly found in binary pairs. These boundaries generate the individual and communal as forms that capture present longing, future dreams, and past regrets, in terms of sustainability, vitality, authenticity, community, perfectability, soul, and security itself. The precise content and contours of these boundaries shift from one configuration of time, place, and space to another, as do the contours of human being and community themselves, but what remains consistent are imaginaries of these ideal conditions as simultaneously having been lost to urbanization and only made possible through urbanization, and thus both threatened and sustained by further, transformed processes of urbanization. These constitute dominant political imaginaries, which continually seek to achieve desired but fragile boundaries of life, longevity, and security: boundaries that seek to define politics and its limits. The third essay ('Unstable Political Boundaries and Tentative Aporetic Methods') outlines the variable patterns through which these political boundaries are overlaid onto debates about urbanization in Kelowna and proposes a methodological approach for engaging the limits of these imaginaries. The final substantive essay ('Encountering the Political Logic of Aporetic Boundaries in Kelowna') re-engages urbanization debates in Kelowna following the patterns generated by this methodological approach.

In greater and lesser degrees, this work revolves around the long-standing ways that urbanization has functioned as a narrative that entails and assumes a range of claims about political community and political transformation, political securities and insecurities, and ultimately political authority. Much of this has been animated by a tension that Zygmunt Bauman (2003) identifies, in a narrower context, as the "city of hope" and "city of fear." Urbanization, in Canada as elsewhere, has long been associated not simply with dreams of progress, development, and growth, but with fears of these very features, generating complex spatiotemporal dynamics of progress and return, and complex affective dynamics of idealization and demonization: "[i]n metropolitan Canada itself, much city-building since Victorian times has kept anti-urban desires alive by promising an escape from the city in low-density suburbs and lush central-city areas"

(Keil and Kipfer 2003: 338). The popular ideal of the transformed city has long relied on a dream of reconstituting political community through a changed or renewed resolution of these repeated boundary disputes: between rural and urban, nature and culture, embodiment and rationality, tradition and progress.

The narrow imaginary of reformed urbanization leading to a transformed city is echoed by academic attempts to transform understandings of the city into understandings of urbanization itself, such that many of these dominant boundaries continually reappear within the literature engaged here. The first essay engages these patterns of progress and return of geographical and political imaginaries, and their constitutive boundaries, in the academic literature, particular urban geography. Visions of how to develop Kelowna participate in this impossible ideal of the “true city” (Yanarella 1999) as a resolution of tensions constructed across these multiple, and only apparently binary, boundaries. The second essay, therefore, engages how these geographic and political imaginaries are being played out, through debates over the configuration of constitutive boundaries, in a particular contemporary location. The two sets of material engaged here – academic urban geography literature, on the one hand, and popular accounts of and insertions into processes of urbanization in Kelowna, on the other – can be distinguished from each other in a number of ways, from the processes and venues of their production, to their audience, to their connection to phenomena of urbanization more broadly. Yet despite these distinctions, and despite all suggestions that contemporary urban geography literature poses a significant critique to, and reconstruction of, geographic and political imaginaries as articulated in Kelowna as a relatively small, homogenous, privileged urban site, the patterns of use of these imaginaries, and the patterns of their effects, remain remarkable similar. The opening two essays suggest that the academic literature and the emplaced processes, when read together, display more consistency in the dominant geographic and political imaginaries than is typically recognized on either side. In particular, the patterns of practices that attempt to delineate boundaries of definition generate peculiar patterns of progress and return, of which the idealization of the reformed city turns out to be a recurring, though not singular or central, motif.

### **Urbanization, political science, and political theory**

The dominant narratives of urbanization also depend on a range of disciplinary commitments, not the least of which is a disciplinary boundary between the study of urbanization as processes and practices of socio-spatial transformation and the study of politics as processes of governance and practices of authority. The urban geography literature engaged in the first essay can be considered interdisciplinary, insofar as it is united by a shared concern about the politics of urbanization, broadly defined in these works as concerns about who wins and who loses, who is included and excluded, how and where decisions are made, and how socio-spatial processes of urbanization effect, and are effected by, the actions of people and communities. As such, the urban geography literature engaged here offers a perspective on how contemporary urbanization functions as political phenomena. Similarly, the imaginaries, practices, and patterns that I attend to in Kelowna use debates over urbanization as a metonym for debates over contemporary politics. Despite their different perspectives, protracted debates, and varying results, these sites can be read as a collected, though not necessarily collective or exhaustive, effort to *politicize urbanization*.

Despite the political assumptions at work in these dominant urban geographical accounts of transitions, the political claims and implications of global urbanization as a comprehensive transition narrative have been largely neglected within political science, international relations, and political theory. The claim that global urbanization entails a transition from or transformation of modern politics poses a fundamental challenge to the discipline of political science, still primarily attached, as it is, to a “dominant ontology of politics” (Magnusson 2011a: 2-3) as the sovereign authority of the modern nation-state. To the extent that studies of global urbanization have intersected with international relations, the tendency has been to focus on sites that evoke global urbanization as a challenge to state authority, such as megacities, transnational movements, and slums, and on locations in the Global South that challenge the colonial violence of Western sovereign politics (Roy 2009; Robinson 2013). Kelowna is the sort of place that escapes this critical attention: just another small, prosperous, predominantly white city, comfortably located within a stable Western state. There has been significantly less interest, within the discipline of political science, in developing an account of the politics of global urbanization that takes this disparate range of urban, non-urban, and peri-urban

experiences as serious sites of analytical necessity: that recognizes the significant need to *urbanize politics*, or at very least, to urbanize the frameworks of dominant political analysis such that they might be adequate to the perceived emergence of a global urban world. By extension, understanding this contemporary global condition as somehow connected to the dominant modern boundaries of both politics and urbanization is increasingly seen as irrelevant, or at least vestigial.

Yet even as urban geographical accounts of contemporary global urbanization make the argument that it is transforming not only *places in the world* but the *politics of the world*, these same accounts of urbanization as a transition tend to assume dominant modern framings of politics. Paradoxically, then, narratives of global urbanized transformation both confirm how central a political analysis of global urbanization is for developing tools adequate to contemporary political life and highlight how the claim that urbanization constitutes a new political condition needs to be critically examined. If we do indeed live, as we are told, in an urbanizing world, contemporary political analysis must come to terms with a range of claims about how and why politics is being urbanized and urbanization is being (or needs to be) politicized, in spatiotemporal configurations, in institutional, structural, and conceptual forms, in operative categories of definition and analysis, and in subjective practices, engagements, experiences, and encounters. However, if the narratives of global urbanization as a transition – a transition not just in socio-spatial rural/urban forms but in the boundaries of political possibility – are to be taken seriously, then as a consequence, urbanization must be understood as unsettling the capacity to use dominant or established categories and practices of political analysis. It therefore becomes necessary to do something other than bring existing modes of political analysis to bear on the problem of global urbanization. It becomes necessary to build a mode of engagement that both emerges out of the patterns of urbanization and that can be iteratively and reiteratively used to analyze these patterns: simultaneously developing political analytical tools adequate to an urbanizing world and approaching this world with these tools at hand. The third essay, which focuses on how urbanization as articulated in Kelowna produces patterns of repetition and return of modern political imaginaries that are generally disregarded in the more geographically-defined accounts of urbanization, suggests one way that these shifting, unstable, reconstructions can be attempted.

The effort, here, is not simply to politicize urbanization and/or to urbanize politics, both of which retain a suggestion that at least one of the two terms is a stable foundation for analysis, but to engage in a political theoretical relationship with the material and its myriad problems and challenges. This use of *political theory* is meant to denote specifically an engagement with politics, or the political, as a field *composed* of uncertain boundaries, and itself *defined* by uncertain boundaries. It is used in an attempt to encapsulate the seemingly impossible project of analyzing the politics of urbanization without first assuming the parameters of the political or of urbanization: the stakes make it necessary to try say something, but the uncertainties make it impossible to say anything determinative, or say it determinatively. This political theoretical engagement with urbanization must include, in its focus, the practices that attempt to determine how we locate urbanization in time and space (spatiotemporalities of urbanization), what we believe urbanization is and what makes it possible (ontologies of urbanization), how we define and study urbanization (epistemologies of urbanization), and what processes and experiences of and encounters with urbanization we recognize and attend to (phenomenologies of urbanization). It must also include a parallel focus on the spatiotemporalities, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies that attempt to define the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of politics itself.

Yet if the goal is to engage urbanization as a contemporary political problem with very real, and too often unequal and violent, implications, then why attend to the four problematiques of spatiotemporality, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology rather than more directly to “politics”? Surely it is better to leave these abstractions to strands of normative political philosophy, and turn attention instead to actual, grounded processes of and engagements in debates and contentions over urbanization: to practices of agonism and democracy, to fields of territorialization and deterritorialization, to analyses of relations of power and authority, to inclusions in and exclusions from developing infrastructure networks, or some other central, material condition.

The problem – which contemporary urbanization certainly *poses* in particularly clear terms, if not creates – is that to invoke any of these possibilities as the proper domain of political analysis is to beg four very simple and very complex questions: What counts as politics? How is it studied and known, and by whom? Who gets to act and

engage in this politics? And where and when is this politics located? It is not at all clear on what basis one can speak of ‘politics’ at all, if urbanization has destabilized not just the boundaries between rural/urban, nature/culture, tradition/modernity, state/market, and homogeneity/heterogeneity, and not even the boundaries of community, authenticity, identity, and security, but the disciplinary boundaries between what is considered social, economic, cultural, and what was considered the core of politics, which in turn rely on the boundaries between, and distinct configurations of, these four problematiques that together are used to define, locate, explain, and engage the world of phenomena and ideas about phenomena. As the significant commentary on the destabilization of the categories of urbanization suggests, contemporary global urbanization not only poses challenges to dominant political ontologies (Magnusson 2011a), but also causes disruptions and reconfigurations of political spatiotemporalities, destabilizes political epistemologies and disciplinary centring practices, and unsettles subjective political phenomenologies. The risk of beginning an analysis of urbanization – focused, as many are, on the politics of urbanization and with a project of urbanizing politics – by attending to a set of moments and places, forms, categories, or phenomena as the appropriate terrain of analysis, is that the hard work of providing an account of these fundamental analytical and political decisions is glossed over: not explained, but explained away.

Given the challenge that this political theoretical engagement with the boundaries of *politics* as a category poses to dominant imaginaries of political science, the neglect of the discipline to take urbanization seriously may seem either surprising or entirely expected. The generalized absence of engagement by the discipline of political science with urbanization as a form of political problem is a multi-faceted problem: not only does it risk perpetuating an inability of the discipline to respond to the challenges and transformations that urbanization is said to pose, but it also risks creating a body of literature engaged with the politics of urbanization produced by disciplines for whom politics or the political are secondary categories of analysis; a field of parapolitical analysis, one might say. This should not be read as a claim to disciplinary authority, which in turn depends on a claim about the stability of disciplinary boundaries, but as an acknowledgement that developing a political analysis of urbanization is a greater challenge than has usually been recognized, both within and outside the disciplinary

boundaries of political science. This difficulty with political theoretical engagements with urbanization is a specific iteration of a broader problem within political science, namely the tendency to avoid political theoretical engagements with the boundaries of politics. As Magnusson (2011b) notes, political scientists, and others who write with politics in mind – including but not restricted to those writing about the politics of contemporary global urbanization – are far too quick to use the word and hope that readers will bring to bear a set of assumptions that are close to the ones the author holds, often without knowing it. Magnusson contends that this practice of claiming an aporetic void at the centre of politics becomes a technique for authorizing a particular account of politics while avoiding the responsibility of giving an analytical justification for this account.

These problem of voids and unstable centres, these claims to authority and practices of authorization, these patterns of progress and return, run through attempts to define and study the politics of urbanization. The models of politics that political science brings to bear, with their incessant focus on linear, progressive, and universal development of citizen-subjects, sovereign states, and the international system of states, are particularly limited for addressing these substantial concerns. Further, political science, which as a discipline is committed to a dominant ontology of politics, bears considerable responsibility for the pervasive, if often implicit, repetitions of the dominant spatiotemporalities, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of politics across other disciplines. The fourth essay rereads Kelowna as a site where these intense debates over the possibilities, impossibilities, and limits of politics are being performed *through* debates over how urbanization can, should, and should not be emplaced here. It approaches debates over the urbanization of Kelowna as a complicated series of amplifying and constraining political claims, as centring and authorizing practices that enable narratives of global urbanization as political transformation. It remains particularly attentive to the ways that practices of authorizing and centring express both patterns of desire for progress towards new possibilities of urban and political organization and patterns of return to the dominant modes of modern politics that these claims produce. At the heart of this essay is the attempt to understand, in political theoretical terms, this pattern of progress towards new forms of politics – the promise of

urbanization as transformation – and the return to dominant forms of politics – the experience of urbanization as both impenetrable centre and disconcerting void.

### **Urbanization as aporetic boundary practices**

The first two essays of this dissertation pull into focus *both* academic debates *and* debates emplaced in Kelowna, which together work to define the conceptual and practical boundaries of contemporary urbanization and politics. The third essay makes explicit a specific iteration of the political problem engaged in these debates, as a political problem of aporetic logic. It proceeds to demonstrate a political theoretical method for engaging the claims about political transition and transformation that are embedded within the broader claims about the transformation of urbanization itself. This political theoretical analysis works to approach urbanization – as an academic construct and as an emplaced practice – without necessarily assuming the content of, or boundaries between, urbanization or politics, theory or practice. The fourth essay demonstrates how this mode of analysis might be engaged in the contextualized debates of urbanization in Kelowna. It approaches a number of seemingly disconnected, even arbitrary imaginaries, patterns, and practices as transient, intransitive, and intransigent effects of a problem that is simultaneously singular and multiple, centred and always decentred: the problem of aporetic boundary practices. In so doing, it enables an encounter with the constitutive aporias not only of claims about urbanization but of claims about modern politics – not the least of which are claims about the boundaries that attempt to define a distinctively *modern* spacetime, form, category, and practice of politics.

An aporetic boundary is inherently unstable (Derrida 1993), generating the desire for sovereign security while simultaneously confirming its impossibility (Tedesco 2012). This uncertainty creates a “hiatus” (Foucault 2002: 371), a spatial opening and temporal pause prior to boundary (re)configuration. Aporitic boundaries are not entities that exist as such, but practices made apparent through their patterns of effects. Similarly, the entities, concepts, and experiences they produce do not exist as such, but as unstable effects that may be fixed in space and time, but only temporarily. Therefore, aporetic analyses shift from concrete claims about “politics” – understood as a particular configuration of political spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology – to

analyses of the boundary practices that determine these configurations and render them secure and insecure. An aporetic analysis does not offer an alternative configuration of politics but rather directs attention to the way that the inherent insecurities of these configurations generate and undermine transition narratives. It emphasizes the political possibility of the hiatus, understood as a complicated spatiotemporal dynamic, whereby the emplacement of one boundary practice does not, or need not, entail the linear displacement of another practice.

Aporetic analyses do not illuminate boundary practices in places, but boundary practices as generative productions of places that are undetermined by standard accounts and unplaceable within standard maps. Kelowna, then, is not a geographic place as such, but an unstable political production only encountered in its specific patterns of emplaced and displaced effects. The indeterminate enactments of Kelowna as place, traced in this dissertation, generate the experience of insecure urban status as the experience of insecure political community, which generates in turn both reliance on and skepticism of dominant narratives of both urbanization and of politics. None of the boundaries of these dominant narratives and their alternatives exist exclusively: all are operative, and all are insecure. One effect is to destabilize claims of Kelowna as a singular “place” occupying a stable spacetime, ontological status, epistemological category, and broadly phenomenological experience within a single, shared political condition organized by the transformations of global urbanization. Another effect is to destabilize claims that spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology are distinct, reliable categories whose use precludes or is prior to the boundary practices that attempt to constitute urbanization and politics.

Therefore, this dissertation on Kelowna is not a description of ‘urbanization,’ or an authoritative claim about what urbanization is, how it works, what drives it, what its outcomes are. It is not even *about* Kelowna, in the sense that it can present an unmediated account, an account that claims the possibility of describing what, where, why, or how Kelowna *is*. It is, instead, an engagement with a set of encounters with emplaced and embodied imaginaries of ‘Kelowna,’ ‘urbanization’ and ‘politics:’ with claims about Kelowna and about urbanization; with claims about what kind of problems and what kind of possibilities are presented by urbanization in Kelowna and thus what kinds of solutions

are required; with the range of complicated political claims involved in the claim to have become, finally, a proper city, a permanent city; and not least, with the uncertain politics of making spatiotemporal, ontological and epistemological and phenomenological claims ‘about’ anything. Where there is supposed to be a singular, shared *Kelowna* that everyone is talking about (at least, everyone in Kelowna), there is a complicated void, a gap that no one is talking about (at least, no one outside Kelowna). This void does not need to be filled, but rather to be opened, elaborated, and understood.

### **The aporetic method and the politics of the account**

This dissertation must also explore the challenges that the logic of aporetic boundaries pose to the dominant expectation that analysts of politics must begin by *giving an account* of what politics, or the political, *is*, in substantive, usually ontological terms. Often used as self-evident, the claim to ‘give an account’ encompasses contradictory gestures, from journalistic observation and empirical quantification to accounting for ourselves as part of the process of accounting (following a Rousseauian model of the political confession, or the more recent development of reflexive and relational modes of thought). What, then, are the possibilities and limitations for political ‘accounts’ to be rendered open, through the process of accounting for aporetic boundary practices? What modes of investigation, and what practices of writing, can internalize the challenging dynamics of aporetic boundaries, and the challenges these boundaries pose to any attempts to finally and securely determine meaning? Along with a prolonged engagement with the boundaries that support dominant imaginaries of urban geographies and modern politics, and the boundaries that produce dominant disciplinary configurations, this dissertation offers a prolonged engagement with the boundaries that enable and constrain methodological possibilities in political theoretical work. It asks complicated questions about the processes of engaging in political accounting and performs a possible response to these challenges.

In a multiplicity of ways, this dissertation is not comfortably located within the boundaries of my own disciplinary and disciplined sense of academic production, but instead is best located as an aesthetic production. Rather than creating a set of empirical or documentary materials, it self-consciously emplaces a self-mediating, interpretive, yet

predominantly *missing* author at the centre of this encounter with Kelowna. In one sense, it follows “the ‘essayistic impulse’” in that it “incorporates the ‘I’ of the writer into a commentary on the world that makes no grand scientific or totalizing claims but is uncertain, tentative, and speculative” (Russell 1999: 277). However, it *cannot* work solely from personal reflection, which assumes a sense of subjective position – a melding of epistemology and phenomenology – that is impossible to sustain within an aporetic analysis. The aporetic analysis unsettles claims to the Bachelardian self-unification of phenomenology and epistemology, just as it unsettles the “I” of the essayistic impulse. The writing must necessarily go “beyond” myself (Danchev and Lisle 2009: 775) and continually decentre the author, in an aesthetic and political strategy “less bound by rules of evidence and more attentive to affect, fantasy, identification and location” (Lynes 2012: 25). The dissertation thus attempts to stage an aesthetic intervention through text, and it pushes the need to unsettle the boundaries of transition narratives of urbanization into the need to “...*theorize* rather than *re-present* experience” (Lynes 2012: 21; emphasis added). The challenge is magnified because the experience to be theorized, rather than merely re-presented, is the experience of the aporia: as Derrida characterizes it, the encounter with the impossible. In this context, the question posed by Danchev and Lisle (2009: 778), of whether it is “impossible” to translate “affective and emotional encounters [into] ‘rational’, academic prose” places us firmly on the aporetic terrain of simultaneous possibility, necessity, and impossibility, and highlights the ongoing need to unsettle accepted notions of theorization and engagement.

I therefore take my methodological cue from the patterns of progress and return, emergence and disturbance, which characterize aporetic boundary practices as a distinctive logic and as an embodied, sensory, affective experience. I use patterns, as logic and as aesthetic metaphor, to focus the analytical work. Yet these patterns are not to be understood as an *intersection* of logic and aesthetic – an image that denotes the coming together of two separate strands – but as a *fulcrum* – a tool that performs work, a technique that enables a shifting of weight from side to side, from low to high, from here to there. In particular, this dissertation seeks to take the risks of progressivist temporalities, universalist spatialities, and centrist authorities of transition narratives seriously, and thus develops a non-linear, sporadic, even disjointed approach to argument

as visualized or sensitized narrative. The imagistic argument that follows tries to make explicit, and to make *visceral*, the extent to which debates over proper or correct accounts of urbanization – its dynamics, its driving forces, its influences, and its implications – have acted as successive attempts to use urbanization to define the possibilities and limits of politics, whether explicitly or not.

Each essay, read individually, is guided by the distinctive pattern of progress and return that marks the aporetic logic, with the intent of generating the experience of an aporetic encounter in the reader. The problem of the boundaries of urbanization and of politics is placed, temporarily, at the centre of concern; it cannot claim to exist there, as a necessary centre. Lines of analysis are followed out from this problem of boundaries, considering dominant boundaries of urbanization (rural/urban, nature/culture, etc), dominant boundaries of politics (identity, community, security, etc), and dominant boundaries of authorizing practices (spacetime, ontology, epistemology, phenomenology). But the lines always return to this temporarily emplaced centre, perhaps with new insights, perhaps with more confusion, and always with some slight variation, some new emphasis. Rather than a linear argument leading to a substantive, determinative conclusion, or a parallel argument with reliably straight lines operating in concert, or even a circular argument that emphasizes the immutability of the central problem, what is offered is a slow accumulation of these subtle variations and reiterations, these felt and rationalized patterns of getting somewhere new, only to find that it is very much like the place just departed. Very much like, but never reliably the same, in substance or location. The fourth and final essay offers moments of slight reprieve from this exhausting experience of repetition and movement, by suggesting ways that the hiatus – the spatial gap and temporal pause – can be used to hold the determinative gesture in abeyance and thus slow the aporetic dynamic, at least temporarily.

The four essays, read together, are guided by the image of the moiré pattern (Lynes 2012: 13), wherein linear images (straight or circular) are overlaid and slightly offset. Rather than running in perfect parallels or concentrics, a moiré pattern generates spaces of intensification, where lines merge and solidify, and spaces of dispersal, where lines diverge and openings emerge. The moiré pattern operates here at the structural

level, guiding the junctures and disjunctures produced when three apparently distinct narratives – the narrative of the development of Kelowna, the narrative of a transition from modern to contemporary global urbanization, and the narrative of a transition from modern to contemporary politics – are simultaneously overlaid and nudged out of alignment. The moiré pattern repeats at a methodological level, with an engagement on the poetics of space and place overlaid onto an analysis of aporetic boundary practices, offering a contextualization of the way that the aporetic boundaries mobilized through urbanization have amplified some narratives of Kelowna as place, and attenuated others. Finally, in substantive theoretical terms, the moiré pattern offers a way to envision the complex fields of patterns generated by multiple, overlapping aporetic boundary practices.

### **Mapping the work to come**

Here, and for the duration of this investigation, I read accounts of urbanization not, primarily, for what they say about urbanization itself, but for what they say about politics: for the claims made about the necessary, possible, and impossible spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of politics. As far as is possible, my use of these terms is not motivated by a claim of what *is*, in ontological terms, nor about the *necessity* of these categories in epistemological terms. Instead, it offers an examination of how these terms are used, and how this usage contributes to the repetition of political limits that are inscribed by dominant boundaries, but always made insecure by the aporetic logic. I parse these accounts to understand how they locate themselves within, or beyond, a perceived centre of modern politics and to understand how and why dominant models of politics seem so much more difficult to escape than the narratives of global urban transformation suggest. The investigation to come suggests that the problem is not simply that dominant models of politics are difficult to escape, but that they generate the desire for and parameters of ‘escape’ (Walker 2010) as a function of the aporetic logic. Further, the analysis of aporetic logic developed here suggests that the absence of sustained, explicit engagements with urbanization as a political problem is an older problem within the discipline of political science, one which not only derives from shared commitments

to a combined dominant spatiotemporality, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology, but which enables it.

The primary academic literatures I engage here, predominantly in the first essay, are delineated as literatures in English (or in English translation) that are gathered together by a consistent array of transition narratives and metanarratives regarding urbanization and politics. The arguments encountered will be presented in the words of their authors. This technique draws attention to the practice of authorship, which suggests the necessary gap in meaning and authority between the quote and the paraphrase. It also draws attention to the practice of quoting as a practice of re-authoring and re-authorizing. These literatures are subject to and participants in an additional transition narrative, namely, the peculiar academic and disciplinary transitions involved, whereby the very problems and terms of debate are continually reframed. One year there is one key debate; the next year, another. It is impossible to keep up with the speed of scholarly transformation, and impossible to access all the relevant literature as a universality, as a whole set of arguments, phenomena, practices, and engagements. This impossibility is paralleled by the impossibility of attending to ‘urbanization’ as a comprehensive, singular, universal narrative of transition (even if of unequal and differential extension and materialization). How do you choose what to attend to? In what manner do you engage, either the phenomena or the literatures, if not making claims to access an entire field of data or an entire body of thought? While this question is central to the work that follows, it is clear, at minimum, that the narratives that follow must be selective and illustrative rather than comprehensive and authoritative, possibilities to play with and reconfigure rather than statements of empirical or scholarly necessity.

The remaining essays will focus on distinct ‘sites’ or elements of Kelowna, shifting as the questions shift, highlighting distinctive patterns of repetition. The primary emplaced sources that I engage to do so are delineated as productions of imaginaries of Kelowna: both official and unofficial, journalistic and academic, spanning the material, textual, aesthetic, and impressionistic. The second essay focuses on the most general, dominant account of urbanization in Kelowna, drawing on the broadest range of sources to establish the patterns that pervade and structure the imaginaries of urbanization and, usually implicitly, of politics. The third essay focuses on specific patterns of repetitions

of dominant boundaries of modern politics – security, vitality, community, authenticity, identity – that emerge from this material, and draws attention to how “the city of hope” and “the city of fear” continually is reconfigured to suggest various imaginaries of political possibilities and political limits. This essay introduces the aporetic method as a means of engaging with these patterns. The fourth and final substantive essay offers a closer analysis of the aporetic logic of these patterns. It first considers the more specific iteration of the vision of urbanization embedded within the Official Community Plan, and suggests that the OCP attempts to determine (and continually re-determine, in its five-year cycles of public consultation and reauthorization) the unstable spatiotemporal boundaries of urbanization. It then shifts to engage specific urban development projects, primarily through development proposals, bylaws, marketing material, and local and social media accounts. Despite their claims to represent three distinct solutions to the problems of urbanization – the sustainable suburb, the densified downtown core, and the intentional community – these models consistently display the patterns of aporetic logic. They offer the opportunity to understand how boundary determinations in these sites follow aporetic patterns of desire and fear, idealization and demonization, authorization and destabilization. These insecure determinations operate through the dominant boundaries of urbanization (such as rural/urban, nature/culture, tradition/modern), through the dominant boundaries of modern politics (such as identity, community, security, vitality, authenticity), and most significantly, through the dominant boundaries of the foundations of authority (spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology).

As a matter of methodological principle, this broad variety of sources is valuable to trace the patterns of repetitions and variations in the constructed imaginaries. However, this diversity of sources is also a matter of necessity, as Kelowna and the Okanagan, still relatively small, obscure, and isolated places, are under-represented in academic literature (Wynn 2010/2011: 3). Indeed, Kelowna’s current emergence as an object of study fits neatly into the dominant narrative of its urbanization, a sign that its progressive development towards a more recognizably ‘urban’ life now includes a growing and vibrant research university that draws it into the global networks of knowledge economies.

Together, these four essays will demonstrate how some or all of these boundaries are being contested, and how they are being used to make centring/authorizing claims. Some boundaries will seem more prominent or central than others in each essay, but this is as much an effect of the centring practices as it is of any necessary centrality. Following the image of the moiré pattern, these boundaries do not map directly, or unidirectionally, onto each other. They continually participate in one another, sometimes in conjunction, sometimes in disjunction. They produce iterations and reiterations of dominant accounts, and therefore also produce the sense that, though dominant, these accounts are fragile and rely continually on authorizing strategies across all forms and iterations of boundaries. Thus the political effect of the dominant response to aporetic logic – the need to secure the inherent insecurity; the impossible task of eliminating the inherent impossibility – is to continually produce and reproduce a complex of regulative ideals. Perfect security, perfect community, perfect cities, may all be impossible, but the authorizing strategies conjoin everyone to act as if they can be secured and thus materialized and embodied.

These authorizing strategies, finally, extend into the disciplinary boundaries that have configured urbanization and politics as separate, if related, fields. The standard scholarly practices of authorization – tracing one or more lines of intellectual development and centres of intellectual debate in the authorship, and authorization, of a history or genealogy of urbanization literature – will be particularly addressed in the first essay. As disciplinary and disciplined academics, we become called to embody a regulative ideal of intellectual work and our own authority as intellectuals, laying claim to the capacity to define the boundaries of our disciplines. In this sense, the boundaries of dominant ‘modern’ accounts of urbanization and politics work as amplifications, as series of boundaries that create a seemingly immutably configuration of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology. Yet they also work as attenuations, displaying the disjunctions and oppositions between geographical imaginaries of ‘the modern’ – tied as they are to industrialization and urbanization as socio-spatial transformations – and political imaginaries of ‘the modern’ – tied, instead, to earlier transformations not simply in governance, but in the logics of authority and authorization (Magnusson 2011a).

## **Into the hiatus: openings, pauses, and impossible thoughts**

The starting point of this work is a particularly dominant, Western, Northern, affluent and privileged narrative, not because it is necessarily dominant, or necessarily central, but because it continues to pervade multiple and diverse attempts to engage and produce different possibilities of living together. The process of imagining and creating alternative spacetimes, forms, practices, and experiences of politics has proven challenged by recreating modern forms of politics (Walker 2010). The way that this narrative continually repositions itself as dominant, continually authorizes its own centrality, needs to be better understood. Its dominance is not monolithic, but it is more pervasive than nuanced accounts of multiplicity suggest. Placing this dominant account once again at the centre is a temporary decision to intensify focus as a means of opening the dominant moments of closure. It is a strategy to identify sites of hiatus and refuse the panicked gesture to escape the undecidability of the hiatus by accepting, yet again, the impossible sovereign decision. The aporetic hiatus provides a pause, a moment, in the dynamic of boundary determinations and redeterminations. It challenges the necessity and stability of boundaries, including claims about the spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies, of urbanization and politics, and so all must be opened.

Kelowna can help us do this, not because it has developed a unique solution to the contemporary problems of urbanization and of politics that can be replicated and applied in other contexts, but because in Kelowna a particular configuration of the problem and its claimed solutions enable us to investigate how these work together to continue to define, determine, and limit political possibilities. Kelowna presents a particular sense of what it takes to be a political community, highlighting the commitments and assumptions that help make the trajectory of urbanization possible and that make developing a political analysis of urbanization, and of the urbanization of politics, both necessary and seemingly impossible. Kelowna opens specific, and too-often neglected, themes in relation to urbanization and politics: the possibility and limits of representation, intellectualization, colonization, development, sustainability, idealization, perfectability, revitalization. These and many other themes appear and reappear through the cycles of

iteration and reiteration, not because they are interesting, but because they are involved in attempts to centre and decentre the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of politics. Finally, and not insignificantly, Kelowna is my starting point because it is my home. Just as aporetic boundaries cannot be known outside of their specific, contextualized instantiations and effects, the possibilities and limits of politics are not abstractions but the effects of contextualized work. This is where I live, and so this is where the politics of home, of settling, of living together, is contextualized.

This dissertation enacts a pause in the face of expectations to make a definitive statement about the spacetime, form, category and practice of urbanization as transition, or to place itself at a particular moment within these transition narratives. Instead, it works continually to open the space and time necessary to investigate what it is about urbanization and our conceptions of urbanization that challenge our ability to develop political analyses capable of keeping up with the very radical change in political life that urbanization is supposed to entail. It develops a line of political theoretical analysis that takes seriously the processes, effects, and implications of engaging, rather than reproducing, the problematic modes of modern politics, including the very boundary claims that enable the identification of ‘modern’ politics.

Kelowna offers a valuable hint to this problem, which is so easily experienced as both an impenetrable core and an indefinable void. Speaking to the Okanagan chapter of the Urban Development Institute, Dr. Michael Goldberg (Professor and Dean Emeritus at the Sauder School of Business, University of British Columbia) stated that “the Okanagan...has to be very strategic, it has to start thinking unthinkable thoughts – namely thoughts that are different from the past – and it has to do this very quickly, because others are doing it already. The window doesn’t stay open too long” (Paterson 2012b). While this is so easily drawn into the rhetoric of creative cities waged in global competition, it does not need to be. Instead, thinking unthinkable thoughts offers the brilliant invitation to connect with, experience, and participate in aporetic thinking. There is a window of possibility, the aporetic hiatus, which is always being closed again to create solid boundaries. The challenge is not that everybody is already thinking the impossible, and Kelowna is being left behind. The challenge, rather, is to learn how to think unthinkable thoughts, not just about Kelowna, or about contemporary urbanization,

but about politics. This dissertation uses its emplacement in Kelowna to engage this spectacular challenge.

## ESSAY ONE: Urbanization Out of Context

### The uncertainties of a global urban world

We live, we are told, in an urbanizing world, by which is generally meant not only an unprecedented concentration of people into built urban environments but an intensive and extensive transformation of ways of life, mobilities of people, goods, and capital, networks of communication and infrastructure, and political institutions, practices, and authorities. The perceived transformations are so profound that it has become increasingly difficult to make distinctions between the city, as a traditional form defined by population density and heterogeneity, political-geographic boundaries, and economic diversity (Brenner 2013, from Wirth 1969), and the rural, let alone something that was once thought of as pristine wilderness. In the face of these transformations, disparate analytical endeavors now argue that neither the city nor the urban can be understood as a synchronic object or site, but must be thought and engaged diachronically, as a process or collection of processes at the centre of contemporary global transformations. Scholarship on urbanism is increasingly marked not only by inter- and intra-disciplinary contentions over definitions and identifications of urban form but also over the causes, patterns, and outcomes of urban transformation: in other words, contentions over *urbanization* itself. Therefore, at the centre of claims about an urbanizing world there is a claim about the transformation of urbanization itself, from a modern, localized transition from rural life to city life, to contemporary phenomena that are more geographically, socially, and politically diffused. Everyone seems to recognize that something fundamental has changed, but despite considerable attempts, no one seems to know exactly what that is, nor exactly what is now emerging. Contemporary global urbanization presents itself both as an excess – continually exceeding its traditional spaces, forms, categories, and experiences – and as a threatening void in which accounts and encounters cannot coalesce into a stable and meaningful analytical framework.

While the discipline of political science has been largely unwilling to engage the problems posed by contemporary global urbanization, the social, geographic, economic,

and political implications of this transformation have been receiving extensive empirical, theoretical, and critical attention within the discipline of urban geography, as well as in urban planning and urban sociology. The urban geography literature is particularly attuned, given its disciplinary focus, to the spatiotemporal dynamics of these processes of transition, and it is increasingly vocal on the political implications of these processes. Just as these works have shifted to understand ‘the urban’ not as thing but as processes of change and transformation, contentions over the politics of urbanism in these works have also shifted, sometimes subtly, sometimes resoundingly, to understand politics as the myriad spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices in, through, and against which collective life is ordered and disordered, stabilized and transformed.

Despite the enormous conceptual and empirical differentiation amongst contemporary work on urbanization, statements on the unique political possibilities of the urban are shared, perhaps because the geographic, social, and economic extension of urbanization has resulted in the shared belief that “urban politics is no mere local affair but holds promise for general social transformation (Lefebvre 1996)” (Keil and Kipfer 2003: 336). This general claim leads to the more specific, and more significant, claim that all critical theory must necessarily be, now, an urban theory (Brenner 2009). Yet the proliferation of the urban also presents a shared source of anxiety, from the perceived lack of social order and democratic organization that is said to mark slum urbanism (Davis 2006)<sup>5</sup> or the fragile city of quartz (Davis 1992), to the environmental threats of biodiversity loss, climate change, and resource extraction,<sup>6</sup> to the destabilizing loss of the very analytical categories and objects of investigation that were applicable during the earlier period of the modern industrial city (Merrifield 2013: 919). Urbanization may now need to refer to a spread of urban social fabric (Wirth 1969, Lefebvre 2003) that exceeds, or even explodes, previous theorizations of the city, but the narratives of contemporary global urbanization still replay the tension that Bauman (2003) characterized as the politics of the city of hope and the city of fear. If it’s the case that “the qualities of urban

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<sup>5</sup> Such claims have been critiqued as external, and often derogatory, accounts of life in burgeoning cities of Global South (Robinson 2006; Roy 2009; Simone 2011).

<sup>6</sup> Claims about the “loss” or “ruin” of nature by the city have been extensively critiqued and complicated within the Urban Political Ecology literature (Keil 2003, 2005; Heynen et al. 2006, Swyngedouw 2006, 2009).

living in the 21<sup>st</sup> century will define the qualities of civilization itself” (Harvey 1996: 403), this transformation of urbanization into a global, if differential, process of transition, suggests that politics in the contemporary world is necessarily urban.

However, a great uncertainty joins the disparate attempts to come to terms with these transitions: not only has it become necessary to “blast open theoretical geographies” (Roy 2009: 820) of where the city is and what it might mean to be, or become, urban; the new global urban, as a “unity” of rooted place and circulating space, “is simultaneously urban and post-urban, an urban politics that somehow breaks the boundaries of the urban itself; of urbanism going beyond itself” (Merrifield 2012: 278). By implication, then, this new global urban condition suggests a parallel break in the boundaries of politics itself, requiring politics to similarly go “beyond” its modern container. To casual observers and scholars alike, it seems as though “urbanization is increasing its reach everywhere; the urban is shapeless, formless and apparently boundless, riven with new contradictions and tensions that make it hard to tell where borders reside and what’s inside and what’s outside” (Merrifield 2013: 910). In the 21<sup>st</sup> century, on this understanding, no one and no place is outside the condition of urban living, despite there being no simple, singular, or universal urban inside: the boundaries by which the urban was previously defined, and therefore, in spatial and analytical terms, contained, have imploded. Yet the significant consistencies in political imaginaries of the city and global urbanization suggest that the transformation in the form of transition urbanization represents – from the modern transition of rural to urban (however defined), to the contemporary transitions of a generalized and universalized urban condition – might not signal the transformation in the spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of modern politics that is commonly assumed. It suggests that we have not, as we claim, exceeded or surpassed the “urbanization/modernization project” (Meagher 2012: 478) that has tied the urban to modern politics in particularly complicated and problematic ways. The new lack of certainty seems to mask some troubling forms of consistency. If the basic meaning of the word urbanization is to become like or be made like the urban, then these contemporary claims suggest both a completion and an erasure of urbanization as a process and a political problem, creating an interesting void at the centre of the problem under investigation.

## **Urban geography as contemporary political theory**

One of the central challenges engaged by this dissertation is the problem of claiming the capacity to narrate: to give an account is always to participate in a process of drawing attention to some forms of connection, influence, and effect, one of the effects of which is to shift attention from other possible accounts. Even attempts to highlight the contours of a dominant account participates in establishing, at least temporarily, what is dominant and what is subdominant, or irrelevant. Yet as the appropriate field of contemporary politics has become less certain, presumably as a function of the transformations of contemporary urbanization, attempts to understand the relevance of the latter to the former have become more insistent, though not necessarily more explicit. Thus it becomes necessary to hazard an account of dominant developments in how the field of urban geography has identified the politics of urbanization. This account identifies an internal transition narrative, from naturalized processes of urbanization interacting with clearly distinguished processes of political governance, to a recognition that the complex socio-spatial processes of urbanization are constitutive of, and constituted by, political possibilities and political constraints. While there is intense debate within current work in urban geography over the configuration of these possibilities and constraints, and their constitution through processes of urbanization, there is remarkable consistency in the function of these accounts: they function as a body of literature proposing political theories of contemporary urbanization.

Dominant narratives of urbanization from the early part of the twentieth century focused on sociologies of proportional demographic shifts from rural to urban communities (Davis 2003: 27), increasing population densities (Wirth 1969), settlement patterns and urban morphologies (Park 1969), and the distinctively urban mixing of strangers (Jacobs 1992); on economies of urban/hinterland relations (Harris and Ullman 1945); and on geographies of land use, zoning, built environments, and urban boundaries (Burgess 1967). These narratives rely on presumptions of rural/urban distinctions formalized in the earlier economic work of Adam Smith and the sociological work of Georg Simmel, Ferdinand de Tonnies, and even Marx and Engels. They present urbanization as an externalized process whereby the density, complexity, anonymity and

heterogeneity of urban life subsume and transform the simplicity, immediacy, and homogeneity of traditional rural settlement forms, social relationships, and agricultural practices. Yet this city, suggests Robert Park, must be thought of as “the natural habitat of civilized man,” as “a product of the artless processes of nature and growth that is difficult to recognize ... as a living entity.” For Park, ‘the city’ is the *process* that continually develops and transforms the “organic” relations between human activity, geography, and economy as “a kind of psychophysical mechanism in and through which private and political interests find not merely a collective but a corporate expression” (Park 1969: 92). While not specified as such, Park is developing a conceptualization of *urbanization*. At this point, despite the focus on human activities and processes, the forces of urbanization are often presented in naturalized, or naturalistic, terms: urbanization is identified as a collection of phenomena that necessarily arise from changing social practices, market forces, or developing built environments. Urbanization is a vital process that gives each city “a life quite its own,” and it is this inherent vitality that places “a limit on the arbitrary modifications which it is possible to make” (Park 1969: 94) in its physical form and human order. With sufficient knowledge of the causative elements of urbanization, it would be possible to intervene, to plan, shape, and shift the forces of urbanization to more desirable outcomes, and in this sense, urbanization could be brought within the field of politics, understood as the intersection of urban planning and policy-making. However, this possibility was both implicit, framed as subsequent to a practice of knowledge-building and rationalization, and limited, given the naturalistic and naturalized processes of urban transformation.

The transition from rural to urban is often recast in terms of a transformation of nature into culture, though even in early work the spatial demarcations of rural and urban that enabled the basic definition of urbanization as a transition process were both aligned with and complicated by perceived distinctions between nature and culture, as Park’s naturalization of city culture suggests. Urbanization as a transition between or configuration of nature and culture gets developed in a range of registers, including the economic (the local, face-to-face exchanges of the rural vs. the complex cultures of production and consumption within a global urban condition); the socio-cultural (the more “authentic” and sometimes more “brutish” forms of rural life vs. the civilizing but

also alienating forces of the city); the material and geographic (the transformation of pristine wildernesses or pastoral land-uses into the highly manufactured and mediated built forms and intensive uses of urban environments); the psychosubjective (the simpler, less neurotic, more inherent modes of rural subjectivity vs. forms of urban neurosis such as Simmel's protective blasé attitude, isolation, and schizophrenia); and the spatiotemporal (the traditional "past" of the rural, with its naive or folk art vs. the modern and even postmodern avant-garde progressive work of the city). Even when the culture or civilization of cities is presented, as Park does, as an inherent vital energy that produces a new form of human ecological and moral environment, the alignment of urbanization with the development of civilization is consistent, if not always consistently valorized. As Wirth has famously stated, "the beginning of what is distinctively modern in our civilization is best signaled by the growth of great cities...for the city is not only increasingly the dwelling-place and the workshop of modern man, but it is the initiating and controlling centre of economic, political, and cultural life that has drawn the most remote communities of the world into its orbit and woven diverse areas, people, and activities into a cosmos" (Wirth 1969: 143). Whatever the underlying force of this tremendous growth, these early attempts to come to terms with urbanization focused on broadly social and cultural approaches to identifying distinctive patterns of changes in urban material form and human associations, settlements, and ordering mechanisms.

Motivated by an explicit goal of politicizing accounts of urbanization, specifically against the more directly sociological and demographic approaches of Wirth, Park, Davis, and others, influential American accounts in the latter half of the twentieth century worked to integrate the social, economic, and geographic aspects of urban development with analyses of formal and informal mechanisms of governance, including institutional, individual, and group dynamics. Molotch (1976: 310) theorized that cities were primarily "growth machines," arguing that "the desire for growth provides the key operative motivation toward consensus for members of politically mobilized local elites, however split they might be on other issues, and that a common interest in growth is the overriding commonality among important people in a given locale." The growth machine reimagined urban transformation as an inherently political process, but one still organized through and directed at narrowly-defined political mechanisms of urban government and

policy-making. For Molotch, the crucial question when considering the implications of this model of urban politics was whether the mechanisms and processes of the “growth machine” could “scale up” to national politics and influence national policy-making. Urban regime theory, as developed primarily by Stone (1989, 1993), Fainstein and Fainstein (1983), and Elkin (1987), similarly aimed to “synthesi[ze]... elements of political economy, pluralism, and institutionalism” to explain “the collaborative arrangements through which local governments and private actors assemble the capacity to govern” (Mossberger and Stoker 2001: 811). Urban regime theory aimed to depersonalize the focus on the growth machine by focusing on “informal coalition behaviour (regimes)” rather than key individuals, and by incorporating the “lead role played by city administrators in establishing such urban partnerships” (Parker 2004: 127). The strengths of regime theory, for its proponents, lay in its ability to diffuse power from individual decisions to processes of social and material production, and in its recognition of the division of labour between the (local) state and broader business interests; yet critics remained concerned that regime theory was not widely transferable between urban centres, and could not be ‘scaled up’ to broader political contexts (Parker 2004: 127).

In the North American context, where much of this work was being developed, attempts to politicize urbanization were focused on how the elite and would-be elite intervened in, and were circumscribed by, urban governance through the formal jurisdictions of municipal authority – land use and zoning, transportation, property taxes, and utilities. However, as many others have noted (Brenner 2013), these accounts, just as much as the accounts they were reacting against, presume the presence of the modern nation-state. In the first order, they subsume the possibilities of urban politics within state governance, particularly state policies that constituted the national transportation, communication, and economic networks of cities and their regional bases. In the second order, even when the explicit focus of analysis and intervention is the municipal governance structure and local political network, the ultimate locus of urban decision-making authority is delegated from the over-arching national state structure. As such, the state continued to be framed as the ultimate focus of political activity or policy change. In the third order, though, the very possibility of defining “the urban,” whether in demographic and sociological terms or in political economic terms, was subsumed within

state-based practices of gathering and storing large-scale statistics (Foucault 2007: 100-101]. The ability to see “the urban” relied on a prior practice of “seeing like a state” (Scott 1999), in which the “large scale data collection on human activities has its origins in state needs and continues to be dominated by states” (Taylor 2002: 1; quoted in Brenner and Schmid 2014: 740). Spatializations of statistical proportions of rural and urban populations within a given national population, or of economic investments and growth patterns within a standardized context of common currency and over-arching economic policy, provided the basic scales whereby urbanization was defined and its study operationalized (Brenner and Schmid 2014: 740).

These dominant narratives of demographic, territorial/spatial, and economic definitions of urbanization relied on notions of urban governance embedded within state governance. For many decades now, these dominant definitions of urbanization, and the dominant definitions of politics they articulated, have been under critique. There has been a transition from focus on the local, regional, and national contexts of urbanization towards making global capitalism a central category of analysis. As a result of this transition, “[u]rbanization is no longer understood simply within the confines of national city systems (Brenner 1999)” (Keil and Kipfer 2003: 340), but is argued to be a socio-spatial process of transformation that is an extension and materialization of global economic structures and their post-industrial, neoliberal restructuring. The identification of global patterns of investment and development led to characterizations of “global cities” that could be rated according to their economic influence (Friedmann and Wolff 1982, Sassen 1994), responding to broader theorizations of urbanization as being at the centre of the production of space under stages of industrial and post-industrial capitalism (Castells 1979, Lefebvre 1996, Harvey 1996). Understanding urbanization as part of the globalization of flows of people, goods, and capital has led to significant efforts to articulate how the forms, patterns, and experiences of urbanization relate to production processes (including productions and metabolizations of urban natures [Heynen et al. 2006; Keil 2003, 2005; Swyngedouw 2006, 2009], to consumption habits and cultural practices [Castells 1979; Zukin 1995], to migrations, colonizations, and imperialisms (Meagher 2012; King 1990), and to networks of infrastructure, transportation, and telecommunication (Graham and Marvin 2001). Thus, whether engaged directly or

indirectly, these narratives present a dual claim: first, that state politics operates primarily in and through the structures and practices of capitalism to produce a singular political-economic space (Brenner 2013), and second, that the same processes that are transforming urbanization are transforming this political-economic space.

Neil Brenner has been at the forefront of developing analyses of urbanization as “the creative destruction of political-economic space under capitalism,” (Brenner 2013: 109) and of investigating the transformations and implications of Lefebvre’s claim that urbanization under contemporary capitalism has become “planetary” (Lefebvre 2003). Within the transformations of political-economic space under neoliberalism, the state may still have a significant role to play in shaping and materializing urban life, but the state itself is being reconfigured, rescaled, and restructured to meet the intertwined demands of global capitalism and global cities (Brenner 1999, 2009). Here, political-economic space appears dialectically as both subject to the transformations of global urbanization and as the consistent spatialized structure within which these processes can occur; it is being transformed under contemporary conditions of global, urbanizing, capital, but its ontological foundations are claimed to remain untouched. Therefore, Brenner claims that contemporary debates over the definition of and political engagement with urbanization are the outcome of a specifically epistemological problematique, namely that the categories of urban theory are insufficient to politicize urbanization and urbanize politics. He clearly stakes his terrain of politicization as both urbanization and urban theory, arguing that once “the urban,” as a territorial space, built environment, and dense settlement of peoples, “is understood as a structural product of social practices and political strategies, and no longer as their presupposition, it is possible to position the investigation of urbanization, the creative destruction of political-economic space under capitalism, at the analytical epicenter of urban theory” (Brenner 2013: 109). Appropriate domains of both interpretation and political engagement are thus constructed, with the “analytical epicenter” of a political-economic reading of urbanization constituting a spherical centralization of effective political theory, strategy and struggle.

In reaction to the perception that critical urban theory, due to its focus on political economy, offers a universalized, over-determined, and hierarchical account of globalized urbanization (Simone 2011), the stated need to reconceptualize the urban within

globalizing space has led to further theoretical and methodological innovations. Within this range are projects that seek to replace dominant ontologies of Euclidean space with relational space (Massey 2006), dominant Cartesian ontologies of stable being with immanent becoming (Amin and Thrift 2002), and dominant ontologies of modern, Western, master-planned cities with alternative, emergent urban social, geographic, economic, and political orders (Robinson 2006, Simone 2011). While acknowledging the forces of state policy and the global economy, and the roles of multilateral and multinational institutions and corporations, these accounts often look to the materiality, the subjective practices, the interstitial spaces, and the forms of urbanism developed and lived in specific locales. In particular, the developing field of assemblage urbanism (Fariás and Bender 2010; McFarlane 2011a, 2011b) has sought to replace dominant ontologies of discrete materiality and human/non-human distinctions with alternative relational ontologies derived from Deleuze and from Latourian Actor Network Theory. McFarlane defines urbanization, in ontological terms, as the process of assembling urban worlds, and opens space for the possibility of “urban cosmopolitan composition, where the question at stake is whether the imaginary of the assembling city might allow us to work towards, as a political implication, a progressive cosmopolitan urbanism” (McFarlane 2011a: 219). This search for a new ontological foundation for urbanization as a process, a mode of engagement, and an analytical practice, is again presented as a means of politicizing urbanization and urban theory, particularly through the idea that a cosmopolitan urban assemblage “recalls the concern with the rights to the city but does so through a politics of recognition that has the potential implication of generating new urban knowledges, collectives and ontologies” (McFarlane 2011a: 221). Not only does attending to urban assemblage as an ontology and a process open a new imaginary for progressive political ideals and possibilities, but it directs politicization to local, material, variable “issues of organisational strategy and day-to-day politics and where appropriate, [to] supporting organisation directly with interventions in the media and raising issues with and through social movements, community groups, policymakers, and so on” (2011: 206, citing Marcuse). Politicization, in this account, intends to open space for new collaborations and cosmopolitan collectives that urban assemblage may create, and yet it also assumes which political ideals may be labeled “progressive,” and which political

activities are reliable from day to day. In other words, while recognizing that transformations in urbanization open the possibility of transformations in politics, the politics that forms the centre of analysis remains curious unchanged.

Merrifield (2012, 2013) makes significant efforts to demonstrate that many of the theoretical insights of this post-structuralist vision of relationality can be derived from, and used to nuance, Marxian materialist accounts of urbanization: that attention to the production of urban space through global capitalism can be consistent with attention to the microscopic, to the everyday, and to embodied experiences of collective urban life. Contemporary urbanization, he argues, is giving rise to “a new world urban order, the plane of immanence for new encounters, for a newer aleatory materialism of bodies encountering other bodies in public. Things here encounter each other within and through urban space; the urban confers the reality of the encounter, of the political encounter and of the possibility for more encounters” (Merrifield 2012: 271). In this account of urbanization, the process of encounter that urban space enables is “a process that has no divine master plan nor even a subject as such, only a collectivity of comings together, of sheer co-presences defining its own singular object, the becoming-objective of the world, the creation of objectivity itself” (Merrifield 2012: 271). Here, the politicized notion of urbanization as productive encounter moves past a modern political phenomenology of given liberal subjects encountering each other within a given urban space, and instead focuses on the mutual constitution of spaces, subjects, and politics that occurs within the transitory and intransitive processes of material and temporal encounters. This neo-materialist politicization of urbanization opens possibilities for an analytical and practical transformation, from politics as “traditional party political machines... crony unionism... ‘the working class’, ...the old ideological battle lines, [and as] bawling the same old demands in the same old ‘vertical’ manner” (Merrifield 2012: 277) into something new, something as transformative as urbanization itself. This politicized urban theory must be “simultaneously urban and post-urban, an urban politics that somehow breaks the boundaries of the urban itself; of urbanism going beyond itself” (Merrifield 2012: 278): an urbanism with no limits matched to a politics that disrupts limiting claims to insides and outsides.

Yet many scholars who return attention to local and embedded encounters with and productions of urbanization demonstrate that insides and outsides remain operative at many levels, not least of which in the predominance of theory derived from limited geographical encounters with urbanization (Roy 2009, Robinson 2006). Efforts to “blast open theoretical geographies” (Roy 2009) focus on modes of urbanism and urbanization in the burgeoning cities of the Global South (Dawson and Edwards 2004; Simone 2011). Simone, as an influential example, offers an extensive engagement with urbanization that simultaneously recognizes and disrupts claims about insides and outsides, about the boundaries of urbanism and the boundaries of urban theory. He argues that “the urban takes all kinds of forms because it can operate between the double articulation...[of] the possible – the unstable flows of materials and substances – and the prescribed – the imposition of functional, stable structures that secure a statistical order to their relationships – between code and singularity, expression and content” (Simone 2011: 357). In practical terms, this double articulation means that “the regulatory, extractive functions of the city and the ... plane[s] upon which cityness can be rehearsed by inhabitants no matter their situation[,] ...exist simultaneously” (Simone 2011: 360). Despite the structuring forces of capitalism that produce the “wearying” consistency of forms and practices of urban life, all is not caught and controlled. For Simone, this is the distinctive theoretical puzzle of contemporary global urbanization that needs to be explained and politicized: “[a]lthough political economy can provide a framework for understanding this intensified sense of disjunction, it is possible that the apparent disjunction itself obscures some form of distributed agency at work” (Simone 2011: 358). Politics, now located in the space enabled by the double articulation of urbanization, opens not just multi-scalar but *multi-spatial* (and one might add multi-temporal) “domains where politics, culture, economy and technique are potentially folded in many different ways...as sites of possibility to take urbanization in different directions” (Simone 2011: 364). Politicization, for Simone, is a process of learning how to “discern trajectories of manoeuvre that pull urbanization across mediations that slow down the totalizing aggrandizements” (Simone 2011: 357): to locate and amplify the disruptions and distributed agencies in such ways that urbanization has the possibility of proceeding on paths that diverge from those that global capitalism attempts to dictate.

These disparate approaches share a basic presumption, namely that the changes wrought by contemporary urbanization are so fundamental that it is no longer at all clear that urbanization as a process produces cities as an outcome. As the result of urbanization has become unreliable, there has been considerable uncertainty regarding what a city is, how we should think about the city, or what experiences and individual and communal practices are constitutive of city life. This uncertainty has generated much work within urban theory, as well as urban work done in geography and sociology, to identify new forms of the city, including edge cities (Garreau 1992), in-between cities (Sieverts 2003), and megacities (Nueman and Hull 2009), but it has also increasingly generated categorical and theoretical debates over the continued usefulness of the concept of the city at all. After nearly two decades of analyses focused, in one way or another, on thinking about an urbanizing world through the image of the global city, contemporary scholars are debating whether the transformations are so radical that they call into question the very possibility of thinking about “the city,” as either a single socio-geographic unit or a singular global web of relations. There is a consistent call to transform analysis, from thinking about ‘cities’ or even ‘the urban’ as an object, place, or site, to thinking in processual terms about the urban, whether as the circulation of people, capital, and cultural forms (Harvey 1996, Amin and Thrift 2002), or as metabolizations and productions of nature (Gandy 2003, Heynen et al 2006, Swyngedouw 2006, 2009), or as immanent assemblages (McFarlane 2011a and 2011b). Amin and Thrift (2002: 1) suggest that “[t]he city is everywhere and in everything” such that it is difficult to determine “what is not the urban;” yet despite this confusion, they note that “we still name cities and think of them as distinctive places,” which suggests the desire to hold onto a phenomenological awareness of, or access to, the city as both a place and a category of analysis. Others argue that urbanization has succeeded in exceeding the city: that any sense of cities as discrete territorial units, even if considered as spatially-identifiable nodes within globalized flows and networks, is outdated (Brenner 2013); that both the city and the urban, as markers of territorial locations (even if nodes in a web of flows) are obsolete and must be replaced with the more open category of urbanism, a social fabric woven from the centripetal and centrifugal forces of global urbanization, and its differential patterns of concentration and extension (Brenner 2013: 103). Brenner

suggests that in this context, “the urban” as a spatially-fixed epistemological category remains primarily as an ideological obfuscation of the workings of contemporary, planetary capitalism (Brenner 2013: 93), while the “urban-form under capitalism is an ideological effect of historically and geographically specific practices that create the structural appearance of territorial distinctiveness coherence, and boundedness within a broader, worldwide maelstrom of rapid sociospatial transformation” (Brenner 2013: 104).

If ever it was possible to consider urbanization as a localized process of transition from rural to urban, these accounts argue that this is no longer the case: in these narratives, urbanization is not only a global process, but one that is arguably, now, about a transition from discrete cities within a predominantly rural world to a condition of differential but complete urban extension. The suggestion that urbanization is not just global but *planetary* (Lefebvre 2003, Brenner 2012, 2013) makes a specific claim about the radical newness of this present condition, the sense that it is unprecedented, ushering in a futuristic version and vision of collective life and political possibility (Merrifield 2012: 1-3). Writing about what assemblage urbanism might contribute to critical urban theory, McFarlane (2011a) does not contest the basic spatial or temporal claims about the newly world-wide or planetary urbanism, but rather implies that this is at the root of the significant stakes of claims to “critical” urban theory: if, through processes of urbanization, the entire world is now bound up within an urban condition, then not only is all critical theory necessarily urban theory, but more importantly, the nature of what counts as and is used to develop “critical theory” is that much more critical.

The claim that all critical theory is necessarily urban is extended into the claim that transformations in urbanization – from local to global phenomena – have entailed transformations in the possibilities for politics, at practical, conceptual, and ontological levels: that critical urban theory is necessarily a critical *political* theory, and that the “global urban” has become a key conceptual and spatialized terrain through which the ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of contemporary politics are being fought out. These are overwhelmingly complicated stakes, and there is surprisingly little sustained, nuanced, and critical attention given to this underlying claim of *political* transitions: to the adequacies and inadequacies of the modern (and primarily Western European) modes, categories, and objects of political analysis, that are apparently

superseding their complicated foundations but that reappear all too often within formulations of new, urbanized global politics. In other words, the current emphasis on the politics of global urbanization as a political transition narrative, with its hints of progressivist temporalities and universalist spatialities, inadvertently highlights how “...the disjunction between the continuing problem of sovereignty and the contemporary rearticulation of the spatiotemporal conditions under which modern forms of sovereignty have found expression in states, territories, nations and subjectivities is certainly opening out a range of problems that will challenge the ingenuity of established traditions of critical political analysis for some time to come” (Walker 2010: 51). If analyses of contemporary global urbanization function as contemporary political theory, then it becomes necessary to examine the political stakes of core categories used to define the boundaries of urbanization. These categories include those most commonly used to define the dominant account of modern urbanization, such as rural and urban, nature and culture, and tradition and modern itself. They also include categories more commonly used to define modern politics, which take a particular inflection when used in the context of urbanization: identity, community, authenticity, or security. However, they also include the broader conceptual categories and intellectual commitments that support these claims.

### **Transition metanarratives of global urbanization**

The accounts of urbanization outlined above offer transition narratives that express the problems and possibilities of contemporary urbanization, and these narratives are echoed, if in different language, in popular discourse, as the follow essay will demonstrate. However, urban geography literatures also make claims about transformations of the location, foundations, definitions, and experiences of urbanization: transformations that are defined as a reconfiguration of the *space and time*, *ontology*, *epistemology*, and *phenomenology* of urbanization. As analytical categories and intellectual commitments that exceed the condition of urbanization itself, these four persist in the urban geography literature as *problematiques*, or systems of claims that attempt to define, as internally consistent, their necessary parameters and possible modes of questioning, while simultaneously depending on defined terrains of absence or

impossibility. These problematques are implicitly or explicitly expressed, in this literature, as transition narratives, with all the uncertainty that transformation brings. This leads to considerable debate over how to define, prioritize, and understand the relation between these problematques. The operative transformations, therefore, are not just in urbanization, figured as an external or objective set of phenomena, but in the techniques and justifications for how we might locate, ground, study, and seek to engage with urbanization. Engagements with these problematques articulate the challenges that their new configurations bring to the possibilities of scholarship, of political engagement, and of collective life, and also articulate the challenges posed by their uncertainty, or the challenges posed by one against the other.

The first transition narrative captures the spacetimes of urbanization: its locations within and productions of space and time, its material and cultural places, its rhythms and patterns of movement. Early accounts of urbanization present it as phenomena that were defined by, and that helped to define, a series of operative boundaries that delineated its necessary, possible, and impossible spaces and times. These boundaries include the core ones that we have already encountered, such as rural/urban, nature/culture, local/global (which can also be figured as particular/universal), traditional/modern, states/markets, and even homogeneity/heterogeneity (which can also be figured as whiteness/others). Urbanization, as a process of becoming like or being made like the urban, was a process that shifted these boundaries of time and space, and in shifting them and reconfiguring them, reinscribed them. The constant process of delimiting boundaries that were supposed to be in a process of urban transition led to a secondary narrative, that of a tension between oppositional poles that needed to be balanced, such as the Garden City and later suburban developments that made efforts to re-include rural, traditional, natural elements of community into the overly industrialized urban environment. The spatiotemporal assumption of a *transition* in the spaces and times of urbanization, then, has always been complicated in various ways by the sense that the very movement of urbanization posed a problem of imbalance, lack of proportion, and ultimately instability, which needed to be solved by creating a better relationship between the sides of its operative boundaries.

More recent accounts of urbanization emphasize that these delimiting and definitional boundaries of space and time have been destabilized, collapsed, or even exploded: that they are in transition, with the outcomes not yet known. Core elements of this spatiotemporal transition include that all locales must be understood as urban, and that this urban is global; that all nature has been brought within metabolizations of urban cultural and economic productions; that the future has become present, or immanently will be; that if there is an organizing logic of the space/time of urbanization, it is to be found in global capitalism, not individual states; and that migrations, telecommutes and telecommunities, exurban settlements, and so on, have all extended urban heterogeneities, if not always recognizable urban forms, into what were thought to be homogenous but differentiated rural spacetimes. This over-arching narrative of spatiotemporal transition – this first metanarrative – ultimately suggests a transition from the perceived linearities of time and universalities and homogeneities of space within modern urbanization, to more complicated, heterogeneous and even unbounded spatialities and temporalities of contemporary global urbanization. Yet this very emphasis on the spatiotemporal newness of planetary urbanization effects two significant returns of familiar spatiotemporal assumptions: on the one hand, the instability and uncertainty caused by this radical transition causes a repetition of concerns about locating stability, if not through balance of opposing poles, then through clarity about emerging spatiotemporal systems; and on the other hand, the emphasis on *planetary* urbanization itself suggests a repetition of structures of universal space and singular time.

The second transition metanarrative captures claims about a transition in the forms of urbanization, meaning not merely the built forms, or the institutional structures, but the ontological forms that create the conditions of possibility for the material instantiations of urbanization. Early accounts of urbanization overwhelmingly present it within what have variously been called Cartesian, dualistic, or atomistic ontologies, though not necessarily by the scholars in question themselves. Cartesian, as a simplified name for something necessarily more complicated, suggests that the elements and objects captured within these accounts exist independently of each other, and independently of processes of transition and transformation; while they can interact with and change each other, they are ontologically self-contained and prior to interaction. This ontological

claim creates the condition of possibility for the rural, for example, to be understood as spatially, temporally, socially, culturally, economically, and politically distinct from the urban, which in turn supports the possibility both of claims about unidirectional transition narratives and of claims about balance and integration of oppositions. More recent accounts of urbanization emphasize that the ontological form of urbanization must be reconceived as relational, though what precisely this means, and what precise form the relationality takes, is heavily debated. Relational ontologies of urbanization, both dialectical and post-structural, argue for the necessity of transforming our understanding of the conditions of possibility for urbanization in such a way that urbanization itself becomes the condition of possibility for the delimiting boundaries that were previously supposed to be its foundation:

[u]rbanization as a process has constituted the city and the countryside, society and nature, a ‘unity of opposites’ constructed from the integrated, lived world of human social experience. ... Urbanization is relational – a process which contains, constructs and conceptualizes both the city and the countryside. It ought not be reduced, in our theory or our practice, to the categorical ‘urban’ (FitzSimmons 1989: 110).

This second transition metanarrative claims that the transitions wrought by contemporary urbanization are more than just spatiotemporal, more than just transitions in the institutions and instantiations of urbanization, but transitions in the ontological possibilities of urbanization. This also suggests a transition in the perception of causality, which echoes the spatiotemporal metatransitions: from urbanization as the result of interactions between pre-given or predefined sets of phenomena, to urbanization as a process that constitutes and (re)defines its phenomena as it progresses; from urbanization as a subsidiary process, within structures of centralized authority, that remakes rural spaces, places, and people to be like the urban, to urbanization as an immanent, self-generating, open-ended transformation of becoming like the urban. One might stake the heart of this metanarrative, then, as a transition between claims of the conditions of possibility of urbanization being over-determined or under-determined, between claims of ontologies of being and ontologies of becoming, and thus between dominant political ontologies of sovereignty and contemporary attempts to constitute alternative, non-

sovereign ontologies of relational politics. Yet this focus on what urbanization *is*, and on its conditions of possibility, neglects the crucial role played by notions of what urbanization must be, should be, or ideally is: the practices of idealization that continually recreate a sense of an end-state that processes of urbanization should be working towards, or could be redirected towards. Even when these transformations are argued to be immanent, that is, arising out of the existing conditions of possibility, they exist in complicated relations with visions of the not yet, and the perhaps never. Thus idealizations of urbanization constitute its *conditions of impossibility*, in two important ways: not only the directional future imaginary that will never be achieved as such, but also the negative or inverse of this imaginary, the vision of dystopic urbanization that functions as what it must never lead to, what must be made impossible. Considering these practices of demonization and idealization as conditions of impossibility as well as possibility suggests that ontologies of urbanization continue to struggle with the problem of immanence versus transcendence, though this language is rarely encountered in the urban geography literature.

The third transition metanarrative concerns the categories through which urbanization is defined and understood, and thus the possible, necessary, and impossible epistemologies of urbanization. Early accounts of urbanization present the epistemological categories of urbanization as located within the realm of positivism made possible by Cartesian ontology: not only distinct from each other, but distinctly, objectively real, apparent and accessible to the right observer. The categorical terms of urbanization, according to this narrative, might appear conflicted but are ultimately consistent. On the one hand, urbanization is described as a process that is largely external (social, economic, cultural, material) that can be defined, labeled, measured, and understood according to demography and population, zoning and land use, investment patterns. In this sense, the dominant epistemology of urbanization figured it as primarily apolitical, or as subject to a politics that was primarily external and reactive. On the other hand, these same accounts describe urbanization as a process that is amenable to rationalization, one that can be managed, controlled, shaped, and *planned*. In this sense, urbanization had potential to be the site of a form of political engagement and political possibility, though one that assumes and works through centralized, top-down authorities.

The assumptions of a Cartesian ontology are paralleled by a certain scope for appropriate or possible epistemologies of urbanization, and, in turn, these categories, which dictate how urbanization can be defined, understood, and engaged, also have effects on the possible (and impossible) definitions of politics.

More recent accounts of urbanization emphasize that it is so rapidly and so fundamentally changing the nature of the contemporary world that all of our existing categories of definition are insufficient. Debate within this transition metanarrative focuses on whether, and to what extent, and in what form, research can inform understandings about the nature and phenomena of urbanization, as well as over the extent to which the phenomena can be influenced, and according to what procedures and rationalizations. Various revisions of existing categories are undertaken, and various new categories of analysis, such as planetary urbanization and assemblage urbanization, are proposed. The challenge, apparently, is devising categories that can provide access to urbanization as both monolithic and disjointed, global and local, universal and particular, as Simone's (2011) use of the term "double articulation" particularly attempts to do. The implosion of the possible epistemological categories of urbanization necessarily entails either revising existing ontologies to accommodate the new categories and constructions (as assemblage urbanization attempts) or redoubling assertions that a particular ontology of urbanization is sufficient to provide analytical certainty (as one might read within Brenner 2009 and Brenner et al. 2011). Indeed, it appears as though processes of ontological reformulation provide the basis for the commitment to the possibilities of new epistemologies to shed light on the transformations of urbanization. The core of this third transition metanarrative, then, is from a stable relationship between categories of analysis and phenomena that were clearly the appropriate objects of analysis to the perceived destabilizations between categories and relevant phenomena. There is a sense of transition from categories that over-determine the observed phenomena to a condition whereby the phenomena are indeterminable: the boundaries of what can be considered urban and what cannot have been blurred. This very blurring is argued to be the basis for the planetary reach of urbanization.

Epistemologies of urbanization therefore now require analytical categories that can identify both decentralized, localized instantiations and global or planetary processes,

as well as specify the spacetimes and forms of relational urbanization that bind these together. The focus on defining, labeling, categorizing, conceptualizing and operationalizing claims about the globality of urbanization, of its planetary spread, neglects the crucial role played by the delimitations of meaning that must take place in order for the categories to specify objects of analysis. In this sense, the epistemologies of urbanization are also over-determined and indeterminable: categorical meanings overwrite the phenomena (calling a collection of phenomena ‘urban’ entails a series of conceptual impositions, even idealizations and demonizations) and the phenomena continually exceed the functional and conceptual limits of the categories (there are always more urban phenomena than the category of ‘urban’ can specify).

The fourth, and final, transition metanarrative concerns broadly phenomenological claims both about what sort of person can experience urbanization, and about what sort of activity can be understood as relevant to the processes of urbanization. Early accounts of urbanization present it as something that could be encountered and experienced in particular ways, in particular times and particular places, by particular kinds of people. The Euclidean spatiotemporalities, Cartesian ontologies and positivist epistemologies were paralleled by modern phenomenological commitments to individual, self-contained citizen-subjects. These individuals were located clearly within identifiable spatial zones (rural or urban) and temporal conditions (traditional or modern) and who developed particular subjective characteristics (open or blasée), social patterns (collective or atomistic), economic habits (unmediated work or alienated labour), and political behaviours (amenable to hierarchies versus democratic urban mobs). These are, of course, simplified narratives, even caricatures, but they capture the sense that once someone could be ‘located’ in space and time, it was possible to identify them in subjective terms, and that this subject was then able to experience the world, define phenomena as appropriately urban or rural, and participate in urbanization as a complicated nexus of development projects and conservation projects. More recent accounts of urbanization emphasize that global urbanization must be understood as complicated processes of emergent mutual co-constitution and dynamic spatiotemporal decentring and recentring, encountered in the material, discursive, and inter-subjective effects of these processes. Yet this emergent dynamism has rendered uncertain both the

previously presumed space-times, forms, and categories of urbanization, and the previously presumed subjects of and participants in urbanization. The various epistemological innovations and neologisms, designed as tools to centre and decentre possible categories of urbanization, also function to centre and decentre analytical practice as (inter)subjective practice. In distinction to the positivist epistemological stance that phenomena are defined, ordered, and understood through the activity of a purely rational subject, contemporary phenomenologies of urbanization emphasize an interactive, embodied process of encounter and mutual constitution (see Casey 1998). Whereas the categories of the transition narratives outlined above (rural/urban, nature/culture, traditional/modern, homogenous/heterogeneous) were previously understood as the boundaries of experience and encounter that enable urbanization to be defined, they are now more likely to function as the boundaries that one experiences as being in transition in order to identify urbanization. Remembering Amin and Thrift (2002), even when categorical or ontological terms fail to define the city, some fundamental experience of urban-ness is supposed to make it possible to *know* what constitutes an urban encounter.

This transition metanarrative, therefore, claims that included within the transformations of urbanization is a transformation or reconfiguration of phenomenology from its modern sense, which explains efforts to rethink urbanization through the encounter (Merrifield 2012, Simone 2011, McFarlane 2011a and 2011b, Closs Stephens 2010), the *melée* (Closs Stephens 2013: 94-96), and other imaginaries and metaphors of inter-subjective collective life. The possibilities of phenomenology are apparently urbanized: “who” experiences is not given nor even singular, but derived from and constituted by encounters and engagements that are, in spatiotemporal, ontological, and epistemological terms, somehow fundamentally urban; and the “what, where, and when” of encounters are open-ended, not pre-determined or pre-given. This reconfigured phenomenology perpetuates the spatiotemporal, ontological and epistemological uncertainty that contemporary global urbanization is supposed to generate, even as it requires the new spatiotemporal, ontological, and epistemological claims to support its revisions.

## Dialectics, relationalities, logics

The extent and complexity of the problems facing attempts to engage analytically with contemporary urbanization become apparent when these problematques are themselves figured as undergoing uncertain transitions because of urbanization, and yet are still figured as necessary for analyzing the transitions of urbanization. A critical challenge, then, as participants in and analysts of practices that give rise to claims about a new global urban age, is to develop a functioning answer to the questions of what phenomena you attend to, on what basis you understand yourself in relation to these phenomena, and on what basis you authorize your analysis as a *political* analysis. The identification and organization of the relevant phenomena can be grounded in any of the standard transition narratives outlined initially, and pursued through any of the problematques formed by the four transition metanarratives. Is global urbanization primarily a transition from local to global forms of organization? If so, is that primarily a spatiotemporal claim, where the local was delimited, possibly rural, and certainly *before*, while the global is spatially inclusive, fundamentally urban, and definitively *now*, even *futuristic*? Or is it primarily an ontological claim, a question of the conditions of possibility for discrete locales then and fully integrative urban networks or fabrics now? Is it an epistemological concern, a pressing need to define how one might continue to understand the particularity of local place in the context of this globalized spread of urban life, such as through Massey's (2006) notion of "place-beyond-place"? As a phenomenological concern, the problem is doubled: given this much uncertainty, how does one locate phenomena as appropriately local or global, or even relationally both local and global, let alone maintain an argument for why this is the most significant collection of phenomena? And how do you think of the 'one' who is doing this thinking, when one is both emplaced and displaced, when one is multiple, constituted through embodied encounters (Merrifield 2012, Massey 2006) with a global, distantiated (Amin and Thrift 2002) many, and when the categories of thought are uncertain? These four problematques – which structure the transition narratives of global urban, if only in skeletal terms: internal, often felt but not seen, taken for granted until broken – are most frequently, at this juncture, understood as sites of myriad uncertainties.

These problems take on many iterations. Some, such as the increasing sense that dominant modern categories of analysis (rural/urban, nature/culture, and so on) can no longer capture the proliferation of phenomena attached to urbanization, have already been introduced here. Other problems will become visible as the analysis of contemporary urbanization shifts to a more contextualized focus. It will become increasingly apparent that the patterns of progress from and return to these dominant categories, and the dominant configurations of these problematiques, intensify focus on some elements of the phenomena and obscure the relevance of other features. Further, it will become possible to see how these categories and configurations are not empirically derived from a known set of relevant phenomena, but act normatively, even regulatively, to define what modes of urbanization are relevant, appropriate, or desirable. In other words, the categories, concepts, and engagements with urbanization do not effectively capture the phenomena observed. More importantly, basing analytical choices about the relevant phenomena of urbanization on problematic ontologies and epistemologies perpetuates both the inability to develop appropriate methods of sight, observation, and encounter with the myriad phenomena of urbanization, and the inability to acknowledge participation in making claims about what is revealed by these phenomenological observations. These, and the many other iterations of the problems of contemporary urbanization, are not simply analytical problems. They need to be reconfigured as political problems.

As already suggested, the contemporary literatures suggest three possible routes through the uncertainties of these four problematiques. The first is the route predominantly grouped under the label of critical urban theory, as derived from Marxist, dialectical thinking. As articulated particularly by Brenner (2013), this approach sees the problem of contemporary urbanization as an epistemological problem, or more specifically, a problem grounded primarily in transitions that require existing categories and epistemologies to be similarly transformed. He therefore deals with the analytical uncertainty by recentring analysis: by staking a claim to a necessary analytical epicenter (Brenner 2013). This critical urban theory separates the relevant from the irrelevant by defining the structural processes that determine the production of urbanized spacetimes, forms, categories, and subjectivities. While offering some of the most determined statements on the processes and politics of contemporary urbanization, and some of the

clearest analyses of urbanization as the ongoing transitions of “creative-destruction,” this dialectically-driven approach is minimally capable of reflecting on the ontological assumptions that support its analytical certitude or the political implications of its claims to authority. The second route, suggesting that the critical urban theory emphasis on determinative structures contributes to the over-determination (McFarlane 2011a) of urban possibility, argues for a relational, immanent ontology of the co-constitution and mutual implication of entities, particularly across divides previously configured as material and conceptual, or human and non-human (whether natural or technological). Rather than focus on determinative structures, relational approaches leave possibilities as wide open as this new planetary condition. Work under this rubric focuses on various levels of minutia and repetitions of patterns (McFarlane 2011b), but also leaves it somewhat unclear as to how and why the phenomena chosen should be understood as the important or relevant ones, or even ‘urban’ at all (Simone 2011). Further, relationality, particularly in the figure of assemblages derived from actor-network-theory, as used within analyses of global urbanization (Amin and Thrift 2002, Massey 2006, McFarlane 2011a and 2011b, Farias and Bender 2010), is largely unable to account for transition metanarratives: it has little to say about the troubling dynamics within each category and the relationalities that binds them. The third possible route is to look for something like a “double articulation” that allows the move back and forth between macro structures and micro practices (Simone 2011), but also, conceivably, between practices of urbanization and the analysis of urbanization, where both are understood as practices of subjective and phenomenal (co-) constitution. Both dialectical and relational analyses may offer a way to account for this “double articulation,” though Simone himself ascribes the move to neither approach. Similarly, dialectical, relational, or doubled analytical approaches offer resources to think about the spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological problematiques of global urbanization as both fully imbricated and never, individually or all together, universal.

Given all the uncertainties detailed by these and other analysts, on what basis can a choice between these three options be made, or a different perspective offered? And, given all these uncertainties, on what basis do claims to analytical certainty sustain themselves? It is not clear how these questions might be definitively answered, if such a

response were even desirable, and it is not clear what political implications would unfold as a result of these answers. However, it is clear that without further opening and unsettling, decisions about how and where to proceed will have the undesirable outcome of prematurely closing analytical avenues – prematurely, because the work necessary to articulate the bases of these decisions, or the bases for refusing these decisions, has not yet been undertaken. That each of these three approaches experiences the intractability of the “problems” contained within the four core problematiques above suggests a problem in how we think: not a simple problem that can have a direct, empirical solution; not a contradiction that can be worked out through successive iterations, upheavals, or revolutions; and not a separation or distinction that can be overcome by recognizing processes of enfolding, interaction, and inclusion. At the limits of our existing spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization we encounter the limits of our existing *logics*, understood as an expression of the patterns of practices that bind these problematiques together, and the patterns that different configurations of these problematiques form. Therefore, the previous accounts of what we think urbanization is (the ontologies of urbanization), how we think about urbanization (the epistemologies of urbanization), and what encounters with or experiences of urbanization we recognize (the phenomenologies of urbanization) can be reconfigured as expressing three dominant logics: an empirical, positivist logic; a dialectical logic; and a post-structural logic of assemblage. It is possible to trace particular logical configurations of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology, but the transitions narratives and metanarratives of urbanization that suggest a transition from empirical, to dialectical, to relational accounts are too simple. These configurations are not simply relationally co-constituted and co-determinant, with no single problematique prior to the others or independent from the others; they are the results of specific logical operations.

Of these three accounts of the *logic* of urbanization, the latter two can be figured, with some complexity, as a debate between two different logics of relationality. The first focuses on a dialectical process of mutual constitution and transformation grounded in the logic of global capitalism; the second, derived both from various threads of post-structuralism and from much earlier philosophical works (Whitehead, Spinoza, and even

Lucretius are named as foundational figures) emphasizes more open-ended, self-generating processes of assemblage, mutuality, and multi-constitutionality. While not commonly grouped with other relational approaches, efforts of Marxian theorists such as Merrifield make clear the extent of overlap between dialectical and other relational ontologies, just as efforts of other Marxian theorists, such as Brenner (2009, 2013) and Brenner et al. (2011), make clear the extent to which ontological commitments, rather than simply to analytical epicentres, form the operative, foundational difference between these approaches. The very complexity and debatability of the claim that both dialectics and assemblages offer accounts of relational co-constitution highlights the necessity of developing a more explicit account of relationality as a *logic* rather than as spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, or phenomenological, in isolation or in combination. Insofar as each of these latter two contemporary analytical approaches emphasizes immanent and emergent processes of mutual co-constitution and dynamics of formative and trans-formative encounters, they might be re-described as presenting possible *logics* of urbanization, understood as particular configurations and substantive co-determinations of the spatiotemporality, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology of a new global urban world.

The suggestion that urbanization might be investigated according to different possible logical configurations raises ghosts of structuralism and over-determination, as criticisms of dialectical accounts of global urbanization highlight. Drawing on broadly poststructuralist theory, as many of these works do, suggests a different route to thinking about logics of urbanization. Massey (2006: 157) opens the possibility of thinking about non-determinative relational logics by using the image of the “conjunction,” which in grammatical terms is the part of speech that governs and gives meaning to the logical relations between different parts in a sentence. However, there is more than one conjunction, and each performs a different logical operation within the sentence, suggesting that different operative logics can give rise to different possible imbrications and configurations, with different meanings and different effects. Further, poststructuralist investigations into the relational performativity of language suggest that a conjunction can be understood as a practice, not as an inherent or immobile meaning. If the meaning of a conjunction cannot preexist its performance within a particular

sentence, and the meaning of clauses within the sentence cannot preexist their configuration through a particular conjunction, then a conjunction can only be understood according to its logical operation in a given context: what entities it produces by simultaneously connecting and distinguishing, and what meanings it confers through this process. Just as different performative logics in linguistics confer different and distinct conjunctural meaning, different possible relational logics of urbanization can only be understood as specific, contextualized practices whose bases and effects are therefore contingent.

What happens, or what might happen, when focus shifts from individualized analytical choices within and between the four core problematiques that structure transition narratives, towards consideration of the logical terms that over-determine (or under-determine) the possible, necessary, or impossible configurations of these problematiques? And, given that these two approaches to contemporary urbanization aim to politicize urbanization, on what basis might these logics be understood in *political* terms?

### **Global urbanization as a political logic of intractable boundaries**

The range of analytical questions and problems posed in the previous sections are iterations of a question that can, temporarily at least, be drawn into central focus, namely, the question of how one determines the boundaries that enable the definition, location, experience, and politicization of urbanization. The contemporary urban geography literature reverberates with this problem of *boundaries*, a problem rumbling at frequencies outside the parameters of the dominant conversations. Restating the possible modes of questions as a question about the problem of boundaries amplifies all the analytical and political uncertainties, even as particular boundaries, new or old, attempt to re-secure them. The uncertain significance of boundaries appears again and again, through different iterations of the boundaries that constitute the problems of urbanization, the boundaries that delineate the contours of the problems, the boundaries between different approaches to the problems, and even the boundaries of the disciplines engaging the problems.

Given the repetitions that become apparent when the problems of boundaries are placed at the centre of consideration, it is surprising that the category of the boundary, to the extent that it is discussed at all, is restricted to the boundaries of modern urbanization: the seemingly simple and increasingly vestigial binary boundaries of rural/urban, nature/culture, traditional/modern, homogenous/heterogeneous, and so many other well-worn cognates. In other words, when boundaries are considered, they are framed as a problem of modern urbanization rather than of ongoing political concern. The transition narratives of contemporary urbanization enable an evasion of the boundary practices that support and destabilize familiar categories by suggesting that these boundary practices are now in the past, a matter of merely historical interest. Rather than focus on claims about a range of transitions that exceed boundaries, it is crucial to question what is happening at the boundaries that enables and destabilizes narratives of transition: transitions in and repetitions of the categories of urbanization, but also transitions in and repetitions of the configurations of the four problematiques, in the analytical perspectives on these transitions, and in the determinative or authoritative practices that support these incredibly complex interactions.

In this context, claims about the extent to which contemporary urbanization explodes a range of boundaries that previously demarcated the urban and defined urbanization – urban versus rural, nature versus culture, traditional versus modern, politics versus social, economic, or cultural processes – are particularly significant, because they are claims that stake the potential for a politics of urbanization, and an urbanization of politics, on the ability to *move* (conceptually and actually) within a newly unbound urban planet. The perceived point of erasure of these former boundaries forms its own impossibly complicated boundary, one that marks the ability to claim a transition from modern urbanization to contemporary global urbanization. Shifting from competing articulations of dialectical or relational accounts of urbanization, or even from modes of analytical ‘doubling’ (Simone 2011), to considerations of the logical configurations of the problematiques of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology, offers the possibility of analyzing how practices draw, secure, and destabilize boundaries, and of clarifying how these boundaries operate to amplify and dampen each other.

This shift to a logic of urbanization as a logic of boundary practices may appear outdated, or counter-intuitive, in the contemporary context where urbanization is argued to be a condition without boundaries (Merrifield 2013: 910). Yet when this universalization of ‘urbanization’ – this alignment between a global or planetary urban condition and *urbanization* as a category of analysis – is pervaded with an ongoing presumption that the politics of urbanization and urbanization of politics requires “insist[ing] on cities as the locus of change and the places of promise,” there is the substantial risk of “re-import[ing] the hierarchy of city/country and urban/rural back into our analysis” (Meagher 2012: 477). Wirth issued a similar warning almost eighty years ago – against either collapsing rural and urban or assuming their necessary and immutable distinction based on spatial, demographic, or political boundaries – which suggests the extent to which claims about urban growth then, just as much as claims to a global urban condition now (if of unequal and differential extension) generates a return to boundaries that were thought to be superseded. The erasure and return of these boundaries is present in efforts to retain analytical focus on the distinctive conditions and pressures in smaller ‘urban’ places that do not follow the models of the metropolis or megacity (Bell and Jayne 2006), or in efforts to re-focus attention on the rural and to call for a ‘ruralization’ of analysis (Krause 2013). Such efforts have been implicitly dismissed as relying on the vestigial categories of modern urbanization and as blind to the transformations of global urbanization. Yet regardless of their analytical goals and research outcomes, these efforts also suggest that while perhaps there is no spatial ‘outside’ to a global urban social fabric, our narrative, imaginary, and phenomenological encounters with an outside of the urban continue to shape both how the urban is conceptualized and why “the city” continues to carry analytical and affective weight. Precisely because “[w]hat constitutes the ‘urban’ and the ‘rural’ is itself in flux,” a consistent analytical response is “too quickly to foreclose a distinction between urbanization and cities” (Meagher 2012: 477), just as a secondary analytical response is to argue for the continued importance of such boundaries as categorically determinative.

Yet it is absolutely crucial that claims of the transformations of global urbanization be understood not just as transitions in the ostensible boundaries that demarcate the urban and identify urbanization, but in the configurations of the four

problematiques of place, space, and time, conditions of existence, legitimation of knowledge, and practices and experiences of encounter. Both within and against claims about the erasure of boundaries there operate crucial reinscriptions of the operative boundaries: spatiotemporal, ontological, categorical, and subjective. What these boundaries are, how they are demarcated through the transition narratives of urbanization, and how they operate to delimit, secure, or undermine political openings and closures, are crucial questions for any account of the politics of urbanization, yet the transition narratives that depend on these boundaries have served to obscure them, leaving a significant void in these analyses. It is this dynamic – where every push to move analytically beyond boundaries generates an attempt to redefine or reconfigure these boundaries – which an analytical investigation into the *logic of boundaries* seeks to engage.

The disparate accounts of contemporary urbanization engaged to this point implicitly suggest, when read together, that the route to certainty is through identifying the new *logics of contemporary global urbanization*: the ways in which and reasons why new configurations of the space/time, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology of global urbanization are established. The transition narratives and metanarratives are key techniques in this strategy. It is not possible to make claims about transitions without invoking boundaries of some sort, and while the boundaries that sustain the ability to figure global urbanization according to dominant, specific transition narratives (from rural to urban, nature to culture, and so on) have received critical attention (in the form of the seeming transition from empirical to dialectical and relational understandings), the boundaries of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology that sustain the more implicit transition metanarratives have received far less analysis.

Further, while these accounts are arguably, if not explicitly, debating the *logic* of urbanization – alternative configurations of the problematiques of spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization – embedded within them are claims about urbanization as a political logic, or about the *political logic* of urbanization. By a political logic of urbanization, I mean two things. First, insofar as claims about particular co-constitutions of the spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of urbanization are used to derive claims about the possibility, necessity, and impossibility

of politics, they must be understood as claims not just about logics of urbanization but logics of politics. But, second, the various logics of relationality that currently predominate in attempts to define a logic of urbanization need to be understood not just in processual terms (which can still be naturalized, as in Merrifield's (2012) raindrops), but as *practices of governing and self-governing* relational encounters, and thereby also politicized.

Because of the claims made about configurations of the four problematiques outlined above, claims about a logic of global urbanization are already, inherently, fundamentally, claims about political logic: the process of laying claim to a spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology of urbanization in order to define the possible, necessary, and impossible spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of politics, not only as something that can be considered either *separate from*, or *in relation to* urbanization, but as *the collective practices that give rise both to the phenomena that become defined as urbanization and to the processes that authorize these definitions*. Debates about contemporary global urbanization are therefore undertaking a form of political contention: they suggest that understanding the new logics of global urbanization will lead to, enable, or support understanding and engaging a new configuration of global or planetary urban politics. Attempts to lay claim to the necessary spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of urbanization are, simultaneously, attempts to stake out what politics is or must be, where and when it is, who can participate and how it is structured. As different logics of global urbanization lead both to different possibilities for politicizing urbanization and to different modes of urbanizing politics, these accounts are laying claim to the necessary, possible, and impossible spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of urbanized politics without directly explicating or engaging the mode and the stakes of the political debate.

The broad uncertainties over contemporary urbanization, which structure the contemporary debates, therefore signal a deep uncertainty over contemporary politics. This political uncertainty, in turn, suggests a significant problem with these claims that new, revised spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization – whether of relational space, or planetary urbanization, or of immanent assemblages, or even of double articulations – will enable or are the result of new

*political* spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies. The *spatiotemporality* of the political claims is uncertain, contradictory, even: they are expressed as uneven transition narratives and as completion narratives (transitions that have either unequal impacts or that have already taken place), and they are presented, in complicated, overlapping, amplifying and diluting ways, as idealization narratives and nostalgia narratives (transitions that entail either progress and development or decline and degeneration). These broader narratives of transitions of the problematiqués of the politics of urbanization also amplify and transform the narrative of a tension between the ideal city versus the demonized city, the city of hope versus the city of fear (Bauman 2003). In important ways, very modernist political concerns reappear, particularly this tension between idealizations, security, and perfectability, on the one hand, and demonizations, fears, insecurities, and threats on the other. This suggests that whatever dynamic of transformation is underway, the embedded linearities of dominant transition narratives is an insufficient temporal figure for analysis. A more complicated movement is underway, as Simone's (2011) idea of a dual articulation of urbanization offers. We need to transform our transition narratives into narratives with more complicated temporalities and spatialities, and we need to put those more complicated spatialities and temporalities to work as we consider other elements of spatial and temporal emplacements and displacements.

The political *ontologies* embedded in the transition narratives focus, primarily, on a claimed transition from dominant Cartesian ontologies of stable being to alternative ontologies of open-ended, under-determined ontologies of immanent becoming, which enable parallel claims about transitions from sovereign modes of political authority to decentralized, relational modes of political engagement. But the analytical problems with ontologies of urbanization highlight the problems with these claims about political ontologies, and particularly suggest that whatever transformations are going on, they are not as simple as either a transition narrative, or two alternative modes of politics. The ongoing practices of idealization and demonization constitute conditions not just of the necessary core of politics, or of the open-ended possibilities for politics, but of the conditions of impossibility for politics, boundaries that form the limits of what and where politics can be. In other words, 'new' ontologies of immanent becoming are as

insufficient to account for the political claims being made as are the ‘older’ ontologies of predetermined being and transcendent authority. Elements and aspects of both appear to continually condition the possibilities and limits of politics, but how they are constituted as separate ontological possibilities, how they interact, and to what effects, remain to be analyzed and articulated as a specifically and fundamentally *political* process. Part of the problem, however, is that the modes and categories of political analysis and articulation appear to have been fundamentally disarticulated by the processes of urbanization. This *epistemological* upheaval has left claims about the need to politicize urbanization and urbanize politics doubly unclear: not only is urbanization the subject of extensive epistemological debate and reconfiguration, but so too is politics. The claims about new epistemological categories of urbanization function as academic (and usually disciplinary) claims of authority and privilege, using centering and authorizing practices that remain inconsistent with claims of a decentred or relational ontology of urbanization and of politics. So, too, do explicit or implicit decisions regarding the operative *phenomenologies* of global urbanization not only politicize and depoliticize who gets to participate in urbanization, but also politicize and depoliticize the process of identifying and studying urbanization and its participants.

The goal in attending to the political logics of urbanization is to develop a line of analysis that can provide us with a more nuanced and productive understanding of what we mean, and what effects we produce, when we talk in spatiotemporal, formal, categorical, and subjective terms about the urbanization of politics and the politics of urbanization. Therefore, this dissertation engages, as its primary focus, the question of how and why the transition metanarratives of globalization enable and mobilize metanarratives of a transition in political logic, and how and why these political transition metanarratives function through the demarcation not only of the dominant boundaries of urbanization (rural/urban, nature/culture, and so on) but *through the demarcation of the boundaries of the possible, necessary, and impossible spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of politics.*

### **The logic of aporetic boundaries and the undecidable limits of politics**

The urban geography literature engaged here suggests that the dominant account of politics within political science – of modern politics as citizen-subjects, sovereign states, and the international system of states – is being superseded, or at least fundamentally complicated, by the extensive and intensive transformations of global urbanization. Indeed, work on the urban and urbanization suggests that the claims about politics made from within political science have only ever captured a part of the relevant phenomena. Therefore, the accounts of urbanization detailed above highlight the extent to which these modern categories of politics no longer appear relevant, at least not without significant transformation, and perhaps were never as relevant as has been claimed. In other words, this literature can be understood as attempts to re-centre definitions and analyses of politics within the new global urban condition. This embedded claim within the urban geography literature confronts the disciplinary attempts by political science to retain this dominant configuration of citizens, states, and international relations as the appropriate or necessary centre of political analysis. Yet these claims of the transitions of global urbanization pose challenges not just for a politically-inflected urban studies, but for political science as conceived in historical and disciplinary terms, as well as for any attempt to locate the boundary between them.

These claims of spatiotemporal, analytical, and political transitions run into the limits of the boundaries of the modern itself, in two significant ways. First, the boundaries of ‘the modern’ within political science have depended on a particular configuration of the boundaries between rural/urban, nature/culture, savage/civilized (Latour 1993, 2004). Only through this configuration of boundaries could the transition from a perceived traditional, rural mode of life to the modern, industrial city, be understood as a unitary “urbanization/modernization project” (Meagher 2012: 478), with the attendant political, and particularly colonial, impositions that this has entailed, both within states and between states. Claims that the contemporary condition of global or planetary urbanization must somehow go *beyond* the modern, in temporal and political terms, are significantly complicated by the continual return of boundaries between rural/urban, and so on, through which both modern politics and modern urbanization was configured. Second, the boundaries of ‘the modern’ have depended on academic, disciplinary practices, such that ‘the modern’ of geography, sociology, and urban studies

tends to configure a different temporal boundary than does 'the modern' as constituted within political science, even if both accounts are derived from parallel configurations of the other apparent binaries. This disciplinary contention over the boundaries of 'the modern' has ramifications for what counts as both relevant phenomena of modern urbanization and as relevant analytical accounts of modern urbanization: a narrative of modern urbanization grounded in political science would look significantly different than the one presented at the outset of this essay, depending on different spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological assumptions.

Developing a political analysis of urbanization is a greater challenge than usually recognized precisely because these two boundaries of 'the modern' simultaneously suggest two seemingly contradictory conclusions. On the one hand, urbanization as it might be defined through the disciplinary assumptions dominant within modern political science would capture a different range of phenomena, and highlight different spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological possibilities and impossibilities. On the other hand, urbanization as defined through urban geography has more reliance on the configuration of the modern within political science than much of the literature is prepared to acknowledge. The shared political claim made by the otherwise disparate urban geography literature is that urbanization has made the core boundaries of modern politics obsolete by transforming the spacetimes, forms, categories, and experiences of politics, and yet these accounts run up against the inability to define or account for the newly urbanized politics in a mode that does not presume the determining boundaries of politics. If existing political analyses of urbanization within urban geography already entail and assume a range of claims about the appropriate spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of politics, it would seem necessary to shift analytical focus to take into account the insights of political science. Yet this approach serves merely to swerve around the problem: it decentres one set of boundaries only to recentre another set of boundaries, without accounting for the authority claimed through this centring act.

It is crucial to reconfigure the analysis from a question of which set of boundaries best define the contemporary political condition to a question of how and why boundary practices operate to centre and decentre claims about the relevant phenomena of

urbanization and of politics. When the transition narratives that enable claims about a new urbanized politics are approached as a problem of the logics by which boundaries are determined, over-determined, and made indeterminable, they appear to mobilize the very boundaries that made modern urbanization and modern politics possible, even if only to solidify them as the boundaries that might have been operative but have now been transformed. Boundaries drawn around spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization are used to determine the boundary between the political and the non-political. Yet, despite transition narratives that suggest fairly straightforward transformations in these boundaries, the political logics of these boundaries – the ways in which they are drawn, defended, and superseded, and the ways in which they interact to secure, amplify, and undermine each other – are not clear. While the transition narratives and metanarratives suggest the possibility of a straightforward, linear movement, the political claims embedded in these narratives suggest a far more complicated dynamic. The political contentions that are embedded within these analyses are undertaken in ways that feel more familiar than claims about urbanized politics would suggest: transitions beyond boundaries that tend to reinscribe boundaries; transitions beyond forms of central authority that use techniques of centring and decentring to authorize.

The debates over contemporary configurations of the political logics of global urbanization arise in part from the uncertainty over whether this takes the form of *a move beyond* the political logics of modernity, or *a peculiar completion* of the political logics of modernity. Parallel claims about ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological boundaries are similarly both enabled and made highly unstable by these ongoing invocations of the space/time boundaries of before and after that make the transition narratives possible. Tensions, inconsistencies, and uncertainties within the presumed temporality and spatiality of these transition narratives leads to the experience of uncertainty over the space/time, forms, categories, and practices of contemporary politics. The transition narratives and metanarratives of urbanization that are used to support claims about political transitions, therefore, *both assume and mask a more crucial set of boundaries that constitute politics and its limits*. These limits have been figured in terms of boundaries between rural and urban, nature and culture, state and market, local and

global, homogeneity/heterogeneity. They have been figured in terms of the boundaries of identity and community, transformation, and thus securities and insecurities. Most crucially, and least engaged, these limits are also figured through the boundaries that demarcate logical configurations of the overarching problematics of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology that are used to determine what politics is, can be, must be, and can never be. Even when the first set of boundaries is said to be inoperative or irrelevant, the process of drawing the temporal and analytical boundaries necessary to make these determinations ensures that these boundaries remain fundamental to the practices to define and engage politics.

Rather than try to develop a way past this problem, it is possible to pause the transition narratives and think differently, even relationally, about boundaries as political logics and about the political logics of boundaries. By politicizing relationality – thinking of it in terms of political logics that govern the relational process of co-constitution – it is possible to begin to develop a more nuanced account of how the boundaries between politics and its limits are configured and reconfigured. Thus a political logic is both an account of a configuration, and a mode of orienting inter-subjective engagement towards politics, not as an external object of engagement but as a process of configuration, interaction, and materialization. A political logic simultaneously functions, never completely, never directly, to constitute the mode of interaction, the objects of engagement, and the (inter-) subjectivities who participate. It suggests that there is a relationship between an ‘account’ of politics as something external that can be observed and described, and an ‘account’ of politics as co-constitutive, something deeply embedded, such that an account of politics is almost confessional or autobiographical. An account of politics is always an account of the commitments of the person giving it, always a phenomenology of sorts, but as suggested above, one that must reconfigure phenomenology, subjectivity, and political engagement from its modern articulations into something else.

And yet relationality, insofar as it is conceived as a way to rethink spacetime, ontology, epistemology, or phenomenology, is not sufficient. In particular, dialectical modes of relational logics have tended to emphasize binary interactions, relations of movement between two poles structured around a vision of eventual unity. Similarly,

assemblage and network models of relational logics have not been terribly effective at accounting for the spatiotemporal dynamics that exceed linear transition narratives, where the embedded claim is about the obsolescence of the prior, whether as an escape from the old or entrapment within the new. As so many have argued before, from the same dialectical and poststructural foundations that raise modes of thinking relationally, the various boundaries operative in these dominant transition narratives of urbanization do not produce sets of easy binaries. The boundaries that produce these pairs generate endless cross-overs, reversals, supports and subversions within, between, and against them. They are not mutually exclusive, and nor are they jointly exhaustive.

There are patterns emerging: patterns of boundaries that appear as binaries but exceed binaries, of transitions that appear linear only to circle back, of problems whose forms and terms become ever less clear the more they are brought into focus. These patterns suggest the boundary relations of the aporia. An aporia is generally known both as a site of indeterminacy and therefore of necessary openness, and as a black hole and therefore a site of necessary containment, closure, or erasure. However, the work to come suggests that aporia can be best understood as a particular, political logic of boundary relations that generates a characteristic pattern of openings and closures, of movements and reversals, of progress and return. The aporetic logic simultaneously determines and destabilizes the very boundaries it produces, generating a dynamic pattern of possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities that is consistent with the forms of incessant problems, problematizations, and problematiques that global urbanization generates. Aporetic logic, with its complicated patterns of relationality, problematizes distinct spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies *of urbanization*, but more importantly problematizes the ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies *of politics* that enable and limit the current approaches to understanding urbanization. As a political logic, it has the potential of giving an *account* of politics, in the most sustained sense. An analysis of contemporary urbanization that engages boundary determinations, not just in urban geography, or in political science, but through a political theoretical method of the logic of aporetic boundary practices, has a different possibility of being attuned to the resonant patterns and imaginaries that are rooted in other sets of literature and other uses of the constitutive (if complicated and relational) boundaries at play. Yet this complicated

claim can only be gestured at here, in this generalized and decontextualized analysis, as a politicized logic of aporetic boundary practices only emerges in context, through patterns of effects.

### **Contextualizing aporetic boundaries of urbanization**

Suggesting that urbanization follows an aporetic political logic does not provide a magic solution to the perceived problems of contemporary politics, but it does offer a different way of understanding the complexity of the political contests underway in and through our claims about urbanization. Rather than rushing to explain what aporetic urbanization *is*, and thus to accept an ontological frame as dominant, I aim to effect a pause, creating space and time to encounter the political logic of aporetic urbanization *as context*: as a logic, a grammatical conjunction, that can only be contextually performed, engaged, and articulated. To understand how the aporetic logic works – through attempts to determine not just the boundaries of rural and urban, nature and culture, traditional and modern, but through these, the boundaries of place, of community, of identity, of security – is to understand urbanization differently. It suggests that urbanization forms a particularly powerful and entangled site, long-standing and never standing still, where attempts to determine the boundaries of politics itself are engaged, debated, confirmed, and destabilized.

The notion of an aporetic logic appears as an intuition to be pursued, encountered, and explored, rather than a statement of fact, a category to be explained, or a hypothesis to be tested. The development of an aporetic political logic of urbanization cannot be pursued in the abstract, as aporetic boundaries do not exist in abstraction. Thus the work of learning to generate, think and engage a field of ‘politics’ in aporetic terms must be undertaken through the boundary practices that make and unmake place, following the delicate effects, both vivid and subtle, both transparent and opaque. This work could be engaged anywhere, including across the geographic boundaries that define places as singular. For now, it will be engaged through a prolonged encounter with Kelowna, a mid-sized city in the southern interior of British Columbia. Kelowna seems a counter-intuitive choice for an engagement with the uncertainties and undecidabilities of aporetic boundaries, given its dominant characterization as a simple and secure site of modern

Western urbanization: rapidly growing, recently rural and still visibly agricultural, relatively wealthy and privileged within a wealthy and privileged nation, and predominantly white, in both actual demographics and in circulating imaginaries. Yet Kelowna is also a colonial settlement on unceded Indigenous land, which hints at the uncertainties that might open if the tendency to rush through the dominant transition narrative is refused, at least for the duration of this work. For this time, at least, Kelowna is not a simple geographic place, although it can be located on a map if constructed on the appropriate scale. Rather, it operates as an uncontainable set of figures and imaginaries of urbanization. Understood as such, Kelowna opens the possibility of disrupting and complicating claims about the spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization, and therefore about the political claims and political transition narratives that have been embedded and contested within narratives of urbanization.

Through an intensive, almost obsessive, eventually exhausting, and wholly temporary focus on Kelowna, the work to come examines the particular, political logic of the boundary practices of urbanization in context. The tensions and debates outlined above are all at play here, the boundary practices that attempt to structure the phenomena into the problematiqués of spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization all operative. First, despite the prevalence of transition narratives of urbanization, even a reliance on these narratives to make sense of the complicated changes that Kelowna is undergoing, *the spacetimes of urbanization* in Kelowna challenge these transition narratives. In particular, the processes of emplacement and displacement underway – processes of claiming, materializing, embedding and embodying spaces and times by making places for and taking places away from – make clear just how limited and limiting transition narratives are for developing an account of a political logic of urbanization. Second, despite a generalized agreement that urbanization entails a certain form of development – the development of appropriately urban forms – and a generalized disagreement over the desirability of urbanization in this form, there is a telling lack of consensus about the possibilities that urbanization opens and closes and a telling consistency in the way that these possibilities are framed. These debates *open from an explicit concern over the built forms of urbanization to concern with the underpinning*

*ontological forms* that make different visions of urbanization possible, differentiation between these visions necessary, and a deciding distinction between them impossible. Third, despite a common and consistent use of the standardized categories of urbanization – both the categories of earlier, ‘local’ urbanization processes and ‘new,’ globalized urbanization – closer investigation suggests that *these categories of urbanization are being invoked, exceeded, and vacated in interesting ways* in Kelowna. More specifically, the ontological impossibility that becomes apparent in Kelowna – the condition of ontology having confronted its aporetic limits – is paralleled by the impossibility of shared, secure, or securable categories of analysis. Finally, despite ongoing idealizations of an appropriately and securely limited – and therefore properly civilized – urban community, the result of such idealizations is to continually reinforce the possibilities and limits of the form of subject that can define, authorize, and instantiate the ideal. This limited subject of political encounter and phenomenological experience meets its limits in Kelowna, where encounter in the process of urbanization has always entailed encountering, disrupting, and reconfiguring limits in spatiotemporal, ontological, and epistemological terms. As epistemologies are uncertain and indiscernible, imaginaries and modes of representation come to play an obvious and multi-valenced role, demanding new attention to methods of observation and forms of inter-subjective or trans-subjective encounter.

Kelowna offers a view into the gaps and voids of urbanization and the claims and practices of emplacement and displacement that urbanization is said to entail. There is a percolating perception that urbanization has filled Kelowna with buildings but has left a void: that despite its ostensible development as a world-class city, Kelowna remains an isolated, small town; that despite its vigorous downtown revitalization strategy, Kelowna remains mysteriously devoid not just of a centre but of a soul; and that despite its continual and contested efforts to materialize the latest ideal of sustainable, balanced, civilized urban community, Kelowna remains a savage instantiation of the hollow excesses and limitations of modern political and colonial life. In this sense, urbanization in Kelowna forms an aporetic void, a spacetime continually configured and reconfigured by openings and closures generated by the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of the given, the known, and the encountered.

Just as Kelowna is not a clear or uncontested place, Kelowna has never had a clear or uncontested place within urban geography literatures across the spectrum introduced above. Most have displayed an ongoing tendency to work from the scale of actual and imaginary metropolitan centres in order to develop urban theories and urban categories, while those approaches that aim to understand the paradox of globally shared urban fabric and differential or constrained urban development have placed questions of urban and political imaginaries, aesthetics, and poetics outside the epicenter of analysis. Kelowna may have fit well enough within the standard narratives of social, economic, cultural, and political transitions from rural to urban, but these narratives no longer capture the salient features of contemporary urbanization, if they ever did. Iterations of contemporary global urbanization studies that reconfigured world systems theories to identify global cities and place them in hierarchical or networked relationships would not have mapped the existence of Kelowna. However, more recent trends in the global urbanization literature, which have focused on exploding “geographies of theories” by tracing macro or micro practices of urban production in the locations of burgeoning new urban forms – Africa, South Asia, East Asia, South America – have also left no room for Kelowna to be taken seriously as a site that might disrupt dominant narratives about the geographies and politics of urbanization.

At issue here is the claim, made in various forms of argumentation and scholarly practice, that Kelowna is not an appropriate site to observe, analyze, and engage with a contemporary politics of urbanization: not if one’s analytical focus is the global processes of urbanization; not if one’s political commitments are somehow progressive, radical, democratic, or equitable. The implication that Kelowna is not a relevant, productive, or instructive place to think about the politics of urbanization in the contemporary world shows how prevalent, and un-examined, the presumptions about the spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization really are, and through these, the presumptions of what a politics of urbanization and urbanization of politics might look like, and what it definitively could not or must not be. The claim that the global processes of contemporary urbanization cannot be adequately understood from this place draws attention to some of the operative but mainly hidden limitations of the categories at play. It amplifies the void that the experience of urbanization in Kelowna

seems to generate and hints at the need to spend more attention on the limits of the categories in play. The possible phenomenologies of urbanization in Kelowna become similarly limited, through claims that Kelowna is not significant or relevant as an encounter with urbanization. Both the assumption that encounters with urbanization must take one of the forms already established or conceived (that only encounters with a particular form of global urbanization, neoliberal urbanization, or networked urbanization, are worth thinking about), or the assumption that the experience of Kelowna as never fully or properly urban, of being irrevocably, unremittingly, intransigently rural, despite its rapid urbanization, must be in some sense false, work to demonstrate the extent to which some phenomenologies of urbanization are being invoked and others are being rejected.

In many ways Kelowna remains today, as it was founded in its settler-colonial history, as a frontier town, a wishful ruralism meeting a shady, shanty urbanism. Its claim to a place within the dominant modern, Western account of urbanization as development is both incontestable and very, very recent. Insofar as it is possible to suggest that “[i]n British Columbia we occupy a landscape more recently colonized and affected by industrial activity than most in the developed world” (Hessing 2010/2011: 122), it becomes possible to recognize the modernism/colonialism/urbanism nexus that sustains the privilege of white community and leisure lifestyles that are the contemporary hallmark of Kelowna’s urbanization. The rampant contemporary development of Kelowna not only displays important continuities with its settlement origins founded in resource extraction and colonial governance; its current models of mega-development hyper-urbanization resonate with the conditions that others, working from disparate locations within the Global South, note as crucial to understanding contemporary global urbanization (Meagher 2012). While the use of Kelowna as a site of investigation might be justified according to its similarity to other, distant locations that are argued to be central in understanding and engaging urbanization, there is still a gap in how Kelowna might be approached analytically; merely outlining how it aligns with dynamics noted elsewhere (dynamics of global finance and investment, state re-scaling and state-led megaprojects, migrations and temporary labour) does not help to explain *how* Kelowna can come to be figured, in an important way, as a condition of impossibility for

politicizing contemporary urbanization and urbanizing politics. The centring and decentring at work is not merely geographic and disciplinary, but spatiotemporal, formal, categorical, and subjective. Understanding processes of urbanization, with both modernization and colonization, as an inter-generative complex of aporetic boundaries, will make it possible to engage with the convoluted dynamics whereby the determinative practices of this particular nexus continually work to secure its place at the centre of politics, why these practices never quite succeed, and why, despite claims of transition narratives and clearly articulated alternatives to this configuration, these practices are repeated again.

Therefore, this figure of Kelowna – a figure necessarily of my own imagination despite its grounding in extensive, if disparate, forms of research, observation, and theorization – becomes a way of engaging the boundaries that delineate, configure, bind, and release contemporary urbanization. It does so by explicitly and necessarily re-engaging claims about a boundary between rural and urban as a core element of understanding urbanization, not as neutral phenomena but as political claim. Regardless of statistical, political economic, geographic, or urbanist definitions that emplace Kelowna as already urban, the experience of Kelowna is never an uncomplicated or obvious ‘urban’ experience. If, as Amin and Thrift (2002) argue, the city or the urban remains a viable category of analysis because ultimately, we know a city when we are there, then Kelowna serves to destabilize this category, and thereby enact a pause in efforts to collapse urbanization into differential modes of urban extension and materialization. In other words, Kelowna is chosen not because it offers an existing urban location or condition to study, but because it instantiates an uneasy boundary that continually reinforces urbanization as a process of becoming like, or being made like, the urban, with all the complicated amplifying and attenuating boundaries this generates.

The necessary work proceeds over three substantive essays. The following essay (Essay Two: ‘Urbanization in Context’) introduces Kelowna as a problematic site of urbanization and a context through which these problematiqués of the politics of urbanization can be encountered. It traces the dominant transition narratives of urbanization as they are articulated in Kelowna, and introduces the dominant counter-narrative. Neither account of Kelowna can satisfy the questions that are raised, in

abstraction, in this present essay. Indeed, whether encountered as a historical sweep or a contemporary snapshot, whether produced as a comprehensive narrative or accumulated, in a process of bricolage, from disparate and seemingly unrelated features, practices, and imaginaries, these accounts are spectacularly unable to offer a viable account of urbanization in Kelowna, let alone to indicate how, where, or why urbanization in Kelowna might be engaged in political terms. Thus, through successive iterations, with slight shifts in focus and framing as the work proceeds, what builds is an encounter with Kelowna as a site of uncertainty. There is no apparent basis on which to decide between accounts because each account, even when internally consistent, depends on its own configuring boundaries and cannot escape its own limits to comment on what it has framed as irrelevant or excluded. The patterns of layering and repetition, of following an analytical path only to retreat back, of reconfiguring the problem and setting out again, to get no further ahead.... These patterns of frustration, this feeling of not getting anywhere, this experience of an impenetrable problem and of a void where Kelowna is supposed to be found, are all, for the duration of this work, taken as the centre of the problem at hand. This problem has a peculiar form of inaccessibility: at times, it feels like any attempt at analytical sharpness is driven sideways by a hard, impenetrable core; at other times, it feels like an ungraspable void pushes analyses to latch onto other, more concrete, more tangible, possibilities. An encounter with these patterns and problems is induced intentionally in Essay Two, as the *aporia* is, first and foremost, an experience, not an abstraction. It must be felt, in visceral terms, to be adequately engaged.

The next essay (Essay Three: ‘Unstable Political Boundaries and Tentative Aporetic Methods’) focuses on a more specific encounter with this aporetic limit, namely the reproduction of idealization of and threats to political place, configured according to the boundaries of identity, community, security, vitality, and authenticity. This essay argues that these repetitions are an important site through which political imaginaries of urbanization are generated, destabilized, and restabilized. It is then able to introduce the argument about aporetic boundaries as a form of political logic in more detail, outlining the major features of the aporetic logic as derived from Derrida (1993) and Foucault (2002) and elaborating a method of attending to patterns of boundary interaction through the visual metaphors of reflection, refraction, and diffraction. This method is devised,

first, as a means of seeing and sensing boundaries that do not exist as such, but can only be known through their effects, and second, as a technique for disrupting assumptions of binary logic that follow accounts of aporetic boundaries.

The final substantive essay (Essay Four: ‘Urbanization of Kelowna and the Political Logic of Aporitic Boundaries’) addresses metanarratives of the four problematiques of spacetime, ontology, epistemology and phenomenology, by focusing ever-more intently on productions of the imaginaries of urbanization in Kelowna, first through the Official Community Plan, and then through specific development proposals and policies. In four sections, this essay examines the dominant boundaries through which contemporary urbanization is defined as distinct from modern urbanization, namely the frequently noted boundaries of rural/urban, nature/culture, local/global, state/market, traditional/modern, and homogeneity/heterogeneity, as well as their less frequent but just as powerful cognates, such as civilized/savage, ordered/disordered, white/other. These sections attend to how these boundaries are produced, debated, supported and subverted in spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological terms in Kelowna, and they demonstrate how the aporetic logic accounts for their production and their effects. Most importantly, this essay presents and accounts for the aporetic logic in explicitly political terms.

Through this work, the argument about the aporia as a political logic will be developed, elaborated, and nuanced, with the implications opened in multiple directions. Each essay will enact a shift in focus from one set or complex of boundary practices to the next, attempting to go beyond existing frames of the “politics of urbanization” and the “urbanization of politics” to examine the range of openings and closures, contested meanings and claims, and attempts at centring/authorizing politics that are effected through claims about the politics of urbanization. Each essay will demonstrate how some or all of the boundaries listed above are being contested, and being used to make centring/authorizing claims. Some will seem more prominent or central than others in each essay, but this is as much an effect of centring practices as it is of any ‘necessary’ centrality. Thus these essays offer a series of reflections, refractions, and diffractions of the images and imaginaries of Kelowna, using the aporetic logic of relationality to trace the imbrications, amplifications, and contradictions of the various boundary practices at

play. The argument about aporetic boundaries in Kelowna enables the problems experienced in defining, debating, and engaging contemporary urbanization to be understood anew as the problem of experiencing the limits of politics, through which the continuities and discontinuities of urbanization shed light on the aporia as a source of and threat to modern political logic.

Both within and between each essay, including this one, the combined work will function as a *collection*: a series of constructions that elaborate on a theme or set of themes, playing them out and developing them in terms of tones, textures, and patterns (patterns that configure composite parts into an image, patterns within an image, and patterns that repeat and modulate between images). Repetitions are never exact, and where you end up is never where you start. Whether visible or not, the limitless possibilities of the materials have been subjected to a process of curating, editing, shaping, and delimiting. There is a logic, but rather than singularity and linearity, *or* duality and dialectic, *or* multiplicity and fluidity, this logic is aporetic: it engages similarities and contrasts, openings and closures, amplifications and attenuations, possibilities and impossibilities. The challenge, and the necessity, is to oscillate between focusing on the phenomena that are placed, temporarily, at the centre of vision and observing the same phenomena obliquely; between functioning in a spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, or phenomenological register and acknowledging, at some level, the impossibility of this perspective, at least in isolation of the others. If the aporia offers a window into a distinct relational logic, it is a window that consistently obscures as much as it outlines and makes visible.

This encounter with the aporetic urbanization of Kelowna opens a different mode of thinking about the political theoretical possibilities of urbanization, one that insists that the spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, and phenomenological boundaries of politics can never be decided. Rather than a politics that forces everything and everyone into particular spatiotemporal, ontological, epistemological, phenomenological configurations, this urbanized political theory works with the tensions and complications that an aporetic logic of relationality entails. It brings to the fore the significance of thinking about urbanization as the processes of “becoming like” and “being made like:” like the city, like the urban, like a proper subject, like the modern, or whatever. It opens

space and time to see the tensions between practices that are claimed to be modes of self-government – immanent, emergent, and self-directed – and practices that are claimed to be modes of hierarchical governance – operating through idealizations and authorizations most typically associated with forms of sovereignty.

As the following essay (Essay Two) introduces, the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of urbanization are both enabled and limited by the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of politics. As the third essay emphasizes, this relation includes, but is not limited to, boundary practices that continually repeat, even as their reconfiguration is proposed, categories that have been at the core of modern politics: authenticity, community, identity, security, modernity, and sovereignty. More importantly, as the fourth essay targets, it includes the four inter-related problematiques of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology, through which our various political logics are constituted, and which, through their delimitation, produce the limits of politics. Rethinking urbanization, as contemporary transformations seem to require, entails and is only possible through a parallel rethinking of dominant accounts of politics, not only the spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies and phenomenologies of politics but the ways in which these produce and delimit explicit and implicit political logics. The process of developing and explicating the logic of aporetic urbanization in Kelowna will provide suggestive rather than definitive indications of how this project might be engaged and what this project might enable. This encounter with Kelowna is an encounter with aporetic politics.

## ESSAY TWO: Urbanization in Context

### The standard account of Kelowna (and with it, of urbanization)

#### By all common accounts...

By all common accounts, Kelowna has been experiencing intensive and extensive urbanization for the past thirty years, with the beginning of the transition located earlier still. Urban growth came slowly to the Okanagan Valley, and “[u]ntil the 1960s, the Okanagan-Similkameen had been a largely rural society with only three small towns – Vernon, Kelowna, and Penticton – and a smattering of smaller villages” (Hessing 2010/2011: 121). It has transformed in this relatively short time from a small regional town “that was once the smallest settlement along Okanagan Lake” into “one of the major players in the entire province” (Parnell 2011) and the key urban centre between Vancouver and Calgary. The prominence of Kelowna was heightened in early 2013 when British Columbia Premier Christy Clark was newly elected to represent the Kelowna – West riding in the provincial legislature (in a byelection triggered to try gain her a seat in the legislature), though Kelowna has always had a disproportionate presence in both Victoria and Ottawa.<sup>7</sup> While it has many of the features of a typical mid-sized city, Kelowna is distinct within BC and Canada precisely because it is experiencing the growth rates of a major metropolitan centre, far beyond what is typical for a city of its size and relative distance from urban centres. At a time (in Canada at least) when existing metropolitan centres are booming, small cities holding steady or declining, and rural resource and agricultural towns (and the companies that sustain them) going bust, Kelowna and the Okanagan Valley appear to be undergoing an accelerated period of urbanization (Simmons and McCann 2006: 62). It can be difficult to appreciate “[t]he steep growth curve that Kelowna has seen: from a sleepy rural town 100 years ago, to a retirement community of 20,000 in 1970, to the fourth-fastest-growing city in Canada in

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<sup>7</sup> From its early ranching and orcharding families, to the mid-century Premier WAC Bennett, to the contemporary federal Senator Ross Fitzpatrick (of Cedar Creek Winery), Kelowna and surrounding area has had a significant and influential political presence.

2012, with a population of about 130,000” (Cooper 2013). Missing many of the markers of urban place, Kelowna has long been considered a Garden of Eden (Bennett 1998), an Oasis (MacHardy 2005/2006), a “promised land” of agricultural bounty and welcoming climate (Roy 1990: 31), and a bucolic holiday playground (as captured in the 1985 film *My American Cousin*). Crowded beaches, slowed traffic, and reverberations from motor boats and jet skis are a few of the signs of how the “population roughly doubles in the summer when recreation on the lakes ramps up” (Cooper 2013); other, less visible seasonal populations abound, living on orchards and farms and working in the construction industry in the summer, and operating the ski lifts at the local Big White Resort in the winter.

Despite this rapid growth and the significant changes it has brought to the shape and size of Kelowna’s built form, to its economic base, to its formal political boundaries and institutions, and to its social groups and networks, the claim that “[w]hat used to be a sleepy Okanagan town has changed into a permanent city” (Cooper 2013) is still frequently contested, and the basis of the claim not at all clear. To get at how the urbanization of Kelowna is not nearly as clear as it seems, I will start with the clear account. What follows is an encounter with a dominant narrative about the past, present, and future of Kelowna, a dominant narrative about its urbanization or lack thereof, and thus about urbanization in general. This dominant narrative is comprised of claims and counter-claims about urbanization that constitute a structure of conflict over urbanization and, in effect, delineate the parameters of what is commonly considered to be the politics of urbanization. This narrative is insufficient – as an account of Kelowna, an account of urbanization, or an account of politics – and there is a risk in foregrounding it, but how and why it is insufficient is not readily apparent. If this seems like a particularly Western, northern, affluent, and therefore privileged narrative, it surely is, as a starting point, in a way at least. This narrative traces developing ideas, practices, and justifications of development in Kelowna, and as such includes critical perspectives on these ideas, justifications, and practices, where these have developed within the public and academic conversations about Kelowna. These perspectives introduce some of the ways that labeling Kelowna as privileged glosses over the complications, inequalities, and violences embedded within the seemingly simple acknowledgement that “[i]n British

Columbia we occupy a landscape more recently colonized and affected by industrial activity than most in the developed world” (Hessing 2010/2011: 122). This narrative of urbanization, embedded in popular discourses and media commentaries, municipal governance and urban planning strategies, and economic and cultural development policies, is intimately connected to the practices of colonization that emplaced towns, villages, and city centres across BC and Canada, and it is, with remarkably little revision, the same one used to justify complicated economic, social, and political urban development plans around the world. It is at the core of many disparate struggles, in Kelowna and much further afield.

The encounter with Kelowna focuses, initially, on this dominant narrative and uses the boundaries of urbanization as defined by this narrative to introduce what is expected to be the most relevant historical and contemporary phenomena. Beginning here, at the beginning of Kelowna’s colonial settlement, and following the chronological, factual, and critical accounts of development in Kelowna until the present time, offers an exemplary narrative about the relationship between urbanization and politics that is so dominant it has become largely invisible, or at least unremarked and under-theorized. Simultaneously, despite extensive, sophisticated, critical academic theorizations of the politics of urbanization, this dominant narrative is still presented in Kelowna as the means through which Kelowna’s urbanization must be encountered, if it is to make sense. Therefore, the essay follows this dominant narrative to its limits: the point at which it proves incapable of explaining what it claims to explain.

The essay then undertakes a series of shifts, returning again and again to the phenomena covered by the dominant narrative in order to ask the forms of questions and adopt the frames of analysis that are proposed by both the academic literature presented in the previous essay, but also by the popular and critical engagements with urbanization as they are undertaken in Kelowna: questions about the possibility of more equitable and sustainable forms of urbanization; questions about transitions from local governance to neoliberal restructuring; questions about the possibility of community and identity in the face of rapid, globally-driven urbanization; and questions about the political possibilities of people in place, when the spatial and temporal parameters seem so remarkably uncertain. With every shift, particular attention is paid to the boundary operations that

enable both the question itself, and the claims made about urbanization and about politics. Thus, the work returns again and again to the perceived boundaries of urbanization (rural/urban, nature/culture, and so on), to the perceived boundaries of politics (such as identity, community, authenticity, authority) and to the boundaries of that are used to authorize claims (spacetime, ontology, epistemology, phenomenology). These shifts follow the same iterative patterns that began to emerge in the previous essay, patterns of following a line of questioning and encountering its limits, incorporating these uncertainties and setting out again. Eventually, these successive limit encounters, in the contextualization of the problem within Kelowna, raise the problem of the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of making political claims about urbanization in a condition when urbanization has, apparently, undermined the spacetimes, forms, categories, and experiences of politics.

In the lecture by Dr. Michael Goldberg referenced earlier, he argued that the Okanagan was losing its competitiveness. In order to effectively harness its momentum and control its momentous urbanization, he advised that "...the Okanagan...has to be very strategic, it has to start thinking unthinkable thoughts – namely thoughts that are different from the past – and it has to do this very quickly, because others are doing it already. The window doesn't stay open too long" (Paterson 2012b). Clearly, such a statement functions as a banal participation in the projects of creative cities embedded within and competing to stay viable within processes of global neoliberal restructuring. But, as suggested previously, it has the potential to shift and come alive, offering the brilliant, challenging invitation to pause the seemingly unstoppable momentum of urbanization, to identify and rest within a window where there is a productive hinge between openings and closures, and to think unthinkable thoughts while there. The problem is not that everyone else is already doing it; rather, the problem is that despite many such sites of openings and closures, this challenge is not being met. While my narrative begins with an apparently straightforward, dominant, linear account of the urbanization of Kelowna, it does not stop here. Instead, it demonstrates how the thoughts already in circulation expose a range of crucial limits. The subsequent two essays return to Kelowna again, first to focus on particular boundary constructions of the field of politics – modern boundaries of identity, community, authenticity, security, vitality - and

then again to intensify the focus on particular urban planning and development practices, proposals, and policies. This work opens a shared process in learning how to think unthinkable thoughts, not just about Kelowna, or about urbanization, but about politics.

### **Colonization and settlement**

First contact with Europeans in the Okanagan Valley was made in the early 1800s, with the spread of fur trading activities and the establishment of Hudson's Bay Company posts and farms in territories adjacent to the Okanagan (Thomson 1994: 98-99). In 1859, Father Charles Pandosy, an Oblate Missionary who traveled into the Okanagan Valley after years of missionary work in Washington State, created the first permanent non-Indigenous settlement in the valley. He was joined by a French-Canadian man and his First Nations wife. After a first winter at an ill-considered location further north, they moved their settlement to a protected spot along a major creek running into Okanagan Lake. The Syilx called the place *N'Wha-quisten*, which meant "a stone found there for shaping weapons of the chase and of war" (Buckland 1979). The place was renamed *L'Anse au Sable* by the French-speaking settlers, meaning Sandy Cove, and later still, the creek was renamed Mission Creek by the arriving English settlers, in recognition of the Pandosy Mission. More formative than could have been imagined at the time, Father Pandosy introduced agriculture and tree fruits into the valley, and also planted the first grape vines, to supply sacramental wine. The original settlement was a mixed community of French missionaries and French-Canadians (often with Indigenous partners), and the first school was a French-language school.<sup>8</sup> From the Syilx perspective, "[f]rom first contact the influx of settlers was slow and yet steady, and both the Okanagans and settlers worked towards a living arrangement. It was understood that the Okanagans would continue to use their traditional hunting, fishing and gathering grounds."<sup>9</sup>

By the late 1800s, growing demand for food to supply the Gold Rush further north led British settlers to look to the Okanagan Valley to establish large-scale cattle

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<sup>8</sup> Kelowna did not have a residential school. Okanagan Syilx children were sent to residential school in Kamloops, 150 km north, which operated from 1890-1978.

<sup>9</sup> <http://www.syilx.org/who-we-are/the-syilx-people/>

ranches, taking advantage of the natural, rolling grasslands. Extensive tracts of land were pre-empted and granted to settlers, most notably to Lord and Lady Aberdeen (Aberdeen Ranch, north of Kelowna). Soon after, using irrigation techniques developed in colonial India (Bennett 1998: 68), British settlers began piping water from the high plateaus down to the arid valleys, and the first orchards were planted, again to provide food supplies to gold prospectors. During this period of initial encroachment, when tracts of land were being claimed without any treaty signed between the Syilx and the Crown, and when new modes of travel, communication, resource extraction and food procurement were being introduced, “[t]he traditional Okanagan [Syilx] economy was dynamic and flexible; as new organizational techniques, products, and technologies appeared, they were tested [by the Okanagan people] for possible adoption” (Thomson 1994: 98). Yet due to the need for land and the bureaucratic requirements of colonial governance, by the early 1900s the Syilx people of the Okanagan were displaced onto reserve lands and split into state-defined tribes for census and administration; in the land surrounding what was claimed as Kelowna, the Syilx were renamed the Westbank First Nation and were granted reserve lands on both sides of Okanagan Lake.<sup>10</sup>

As was the case for First Nations across Canada, the traditional ways of life of the Syilx – including spirituality, structures of authority, food procurement, and education – were subjected to violent disruption. The Okanagan people, along with most other nations in British Columbia, were incorporated into colonial governance without first having negotiated a treaty, and they opposed their subsequent confinement to limited reserve lands, chosen and changed at the discretion of the Government of Canada.<sup>11</sup> It was increasingly impossible to maintain Syilx practices, but at the same time their possibilities for participation in settler structures were severely limited, both formally and informally. According to a settler-historical analysis, “[t]he Okanagan tribe ... faced the challenge and opportunity of the new political and economic order with remarkable willingness to adapt to new circumstances. However, the Natives failed to successfully integrate into the European socio-economic order in large part because of the institutional

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<sup>10</sup> For information on the Westbank First Nation (WFN), which was the most direct inhabitant of Pandosy Mission/Kelowna, see <http://www.wfn.ca/>. Accessed November 20, 2012.

<sup>11</sup> <http://www.syilx.org/who-we-are/the-syilx-people/>

discrimination of the British Columbia settler society” (Thomson 1994: 96). Such an analysis, while attempting to identify and name colonial violence, perpetuates it by assuming that integration was both desired and desirable; other accounts, both Indigenous and not, both oral and academic, trace the commitments to maintaining Syilx life, land, culture, and politics in the face of settlement, from withholding Syilx children from the Mission school to protesting (with the Oblate missionaries) further pre-emptions and reductions of dedicated reserve lands (Blake 1998).

As initial ranching operations transitioned more and more into orchards, Kelowna increasingly was settled by British upper middle-class families and young men, displacing the Indigenous Syilx and the initial French settler community and emplacing the dream of a civilized, white, rural idyll at the far reaches of the British empire. The promotion of orcharding as a leisure activity suitable for British gentlemen distinguished it from farming as working-class labour and drew an upper-middle class segment of British society that sought a refuge from the pressures of industrialization and urbanization being experienced in Britain at the time (Bennett 1998). Okanagan orchards became a popular investment, and younger sons of wealthy families, who were maintained by monthly remittance cheques, were common settlers. Kelowna was quickly re-envisioned as an Eden, an oasis, materializing a view of rural life that was arguably a fantasy, a nostalgia for a way of life that never existed as such in Britain, and even an urban projection of bucolic rural innocence. The British settlers at this time imported a range of social and cultural institutions, including theatre societies and tennis and polo clubs (Bennett 1998). This fantasy, and the policies and practices designed to bring it to reality, established Kelowna as a place of a particularly white, bourgeois imaginary that has had significant repercussions for its path of development (Aguilar and Keyes forthcoming). Despite this imaginary, Kelowna’s settlement included many from non-Euro-Canadian backgrounds, most of whom worked, initially at least, in the orchards: Chinese, Japanese, Portuguese, Italian, and South Asian newcomers were just some of the most predominant (Lanthier and Wong n.d.). Despite the continual presence of diverse communities, and their establishment as part of the long-term development of Kelowna, the imaginary of Kelowna as a place of a British Garden of Eden, and the actuality of Kelowna’s disproportionately white community, has had the effect of discouraging

increased diversity and reducing the visibility of the diversity already here (Tedesco, forthcoming).

### **Incorporation, development, and annexation**

Kelowna was officially incorporated in 1905, with a settler population of 600 (MacHardy 2005/2006: 93). The townsite was 1281 acres, covering an area bounded on the north by what is now Bay Ave, on the east by Richter St, on the south by Mill Creek and on the west by Abbott Street and the foreshore of Okanagan Lake (Momer 1998: 68). This was not the original townsite; an older site had been staked in the hills high above Kelowna, where a rail branch line was supposed to connect Kelowna to the Kettle Valley railway, but this site was abandoned with the proposed rail line (Koroscil 2003). Kelowna was incorporated as a City under British Columbia's 1872 Local Government Act, which at the time recognized "two legal categories of municipal governments, city and district municipality. ... The district municipalities were to be expansive areas that might include small unincorporated urban nodes set in agricultural areas. The city was to be a smaller and spatially more compact form of municipal government" (Meligrana 2003: 126-127).<sup>12</sup> In other words, "rural and urban categories of municipal government were defined" from the outset within provincial laws, (Meligrana 2003: 126-127), and Kelowna's incorporation as a city, rather than a district municipality, suggests that at some level it was understood to be urban, or imminently urban, rather than rural or resource-based. The lakeside townsite of Kelowna did not encompass the land of the Padosy Mission, and this and other communities continued to develop alongside the formal City of Kelowna. These unincorporated areas were not devoid of governance; rather, they were governed by complicated multi-institutional, multi-level authorities (Meligrana 2003: 120, 122).

Kelowna and its surrounding communities continued to grow through the early decades of the 20<sup>th</sup> century, with residential developments filling in the townsite proper and spreading through adjacent settler communities in the agricultural areas of the

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<sup>12</sup> The designation of "village" was added in 1920 for more spatially and demographically limited settlements, and "town" was added later still "to service the growing resource developments of the interior" (Meligrana 2003: 127). Village and town accommodated "the specific settlement needs associated primarily with natural resource development in unincorporated areas."

Mission (south of the townsite, along the lakeshore and up Mission Creek), Rutland (in the eastern hillsides), and Glenmore (a higher valley north of the townsite). Early manufacturing and industrial activity was centralized in the north end of town on the lakeshore and beneath Knox Mountain, at and past the townsite limit of Bay Avenue. While Kelowna was primarily an agricultural centre, the Simpson Sawmill (first located at the lakeshore at the foot of the main Bernard Avenue, and then moved further north) processed logs extracted from the forestry sites in the hills that enclosed the valley and manufactured both lumber and the now-iconic 40lb wooden fruit boxes for shipping produce across Canada.<sup>13</sup> Kelowna Brick Works, which used the clay from Knox Mountain to produce bricks for local construction, operated from 1905 to 1914 and from 1919 to the late 1930s (with the hiatus marking the absence of labour due to the first World War). Later industrial uses include Western Star transport truck manufacturer, which started in 1967 and remained in Kelowna until 2004 (at which point, after being bought in 2000 by the American Freightliner corporation, production was moved to Portland, OR) and the Okanagan Ready Mix cement factory, which has operated from 1953 to the present in its north-end location.

By the 1941 census, the population of the City of Kelowna was recorded as being 5,118, and “[a]lthough the Depression of the 1930s had checked growth, the population had doubled since 1921. [Kelowna’s] economy depended on surrounding fruit orchards and vegetable farms, but it also had a summer tourist trade as visitors from the coast and the prairies came to enjoy its warm sandy beaches, and its agreeable climate attracted some retirees” (Roy 1990: 24). In 1958 the first bridge was built across Okanagan Lake to connect Kelowna on the east bank to the communities on the west bank. Prior to this, vehicles were conveyed across the narrow of the lake between Kelowna and Westbank by cable ferry, and cargo and passengers travelled up and down the lake by steamboat, with ports at communities from Okanagan Landing in Vernon to Penticton in the south. The technologically advanced floating bridge was named the WAC Bennett Bridge to honour then premier of British Columbia, who was from Kelowna.

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<sup>13</sup> Simpson Sawmill is now owned by Tolko Industries of Vernon. The original downtown location was given as a land legacy to the City of Kelowna by the Simpson family, covenanted for civic use and restricted from any commercial activity, a covenant that has had a significant, ongoing role in a range of urban planning and development debates.

The Capri Centre, with hotel, shops and services, and a conference centre, was built in 1959 in a place that was considered at the time well outside the city centre, surrounded by orchards (Momer 1998: 71-72). The residential developments that followed in this area diverged from the grid-plans of the original city development, and are characterized by Momer (1998: 72) as Kelowna's first suburb.<sup>14</sup> At this time, the population was still under 13,000, but Kelowna was beginning to expand beyond the "cocoon-like isolation" that supported the sense of Kelowna as an isolated agricultural community: "[s]ignificant interventions, not all of them benign, had altered the land itself and therefore had irrevocably altered how Kelowna's landscape was viewed" (MacHardy 2005/2006: 96). Kelowna was known primarily, even then, as the apple box of Canada, and the developing reputations of Kelowna as a holiday destination<sup>15</sup> and retirement community (Roy 1990: 24) intersected with the earlier constitution of Kelowna as a rural orcharding idyll to amplify the historical resistance to non-white inhabitants, whether Indigenous or migrant (Aguiar and Marten 2011), from the displacement and ongoing exclusion of the Syilx people (Thomson 1994), to the continual tensions over using non-white labour in orchards (Lanthier and Wong n.d.), to the derogatory stereotyping of Kelowna's downtown Chinatown, the largest outside Victoria (Lanthier and Wong n.d.), to the rejection and harassment of Japanese evacuees from the coast during WWII (Roy 1990).

### **Beginning of rapid growth**

The beginning of Kelowna's explosive growth is usually pinned to the early 1970s (Hessing 2010/2011: 121), though significant first steps, such as the Capri Centre, were taken earlier. The Orchard Park Shopping Centre, built in 1971, was developed as a site for "regional shopping" (Momer 1998: 72), as it was located in between Kelowna's downtown core and the community of Rutland. From its opening, Orchard Park has

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<sup>14</sup> Once considered at the very outskirts of Kelowna, Capri Centre is now prime real estate in the central city. As such, the existing low-slung mall and hotel complex as considered to be under-utilizing its land and is slated for substantial redevelopment in the coming years, including residential towers, multi-storey, multi-use developments, and a central park and potential skating rink.

<sup>15</sup> The atmosphere of Kelowna as a 1950s holiday destination, all heat and languor and naiveté, is captured by the movie *My American Cousin*, set and filmed in the valley.

drawn shoppers not just from Kelowna, but from up and down the Okanagan Valley. At the same time, the Mission Park shopping centre was opened in the Pandosy Village neighbourhood, just outside the southern boundary of the City of Kelowna. In a crooked nod to the history of the Pandosy Mission, the development is done in a Spanish colonial mission style, with false adobe walls and bell towers. While being well-located to serve residents in the Mission, the development also had the added benefit, at the time, of being legally allowed to open on Sundays, being outside the legal boundaries and bylaws of Kelowna (Momer 1998: 72).

Because of the extensive open land within and outside the city limits, new developments at this time were primarily spread out and of low density. The degree and location of development was soon held in check, in part, by the newly legislated Land Commission Act (the roots of the present Agricultural Land Reserve system), which was intended as a tool for managing urban/rural fringe growth in the Vancouver metropolitan region (Garrish 2002/2003). Extensive orchard and farms lands within the City of Kelowna, and in its adjacent rural communities and unincorporated lands, fell under the scope of the Commission, limiting sale of land for residential developments. As a response to actual and projected growth both within and around the boundaries of the City of Kelowna, in 1973 Kelowna annexed its neighbouring fringe villages, including Rutland, the Mission, and Glenmore. Annexation in British Columbia “represents a policy of containment of urban growth through the expansion of existing municipalities” (Meligrana 2003: 127). While annexation is formally to be under the control of municipalities and local communities, the 1973 annexation in Kelowna was forced by the provincial government without formal local approval (Momer 1998). This suggests that when it is difficult for the province to balance “its objective of having urban developments come within the jurisdiction of municipal governments with the desire to preserve local autonomy and local determination of annexation applications” (Meligrana 2003: 128), the need for urban order has dominated, at least in Kelowna.

At a moment, the boundaries of the city expanded north to the airport and outlying Glenmore suburbs, east beyond Rutland to the slopes of Black Mountain, and south beyond Okanagan Mission, and the population of the City of Kelowna officially jumped from around 19,000 to over 50,000 inhabitants. Other communities remained

outside the city boundaries, and the newly designated Central Okanagan Regional District (instituted under 1965 legislation) brought together “elected representatives of the urban municipalities and rural unincorporated areas into one governmental institution, ... provid[ing] a measure of local governance to the unincorporated areas [now subdivided into Electoral Areas] but ...without disturbing the existing local governmental institutional structure” (Meligrana 2003: 134-135).<sup>16</sup> The pattern of residential development outside of the city limits, once nestled within and between large tracts of designated agricultural land, being brought within city boundaries has had ongoing effects on the possibilities of Kelowna’s urban planning: “...city planners were dealt a tough hand when the rural communities of Glenmore, Rutland, and the Mission were amalgamated with Kelowna in the early 1970s. Because those communities were separated from Kelowna’s former city boundaries by large expanses of undeveloped land, transportation networks were never built until the mid-1990s when the population boom brought with it traffic congestion” (Parnell 2011). These complicated land-use divisions and patterns of early inclusion and exclusion have ongoing effects on Kelowna’s city planning, particularly in densification strategies and transportation policy.

The summer of 1973 also saw the designation of Okanagan Mountain Provincial Park, over 11,000 ha of mountainous, lakeside land beyond the southern boundary of the city. The park was traditionally used as by the Syilx people for food procurement, and Wild Horse Canyon was used as a natural trap for wild horses. The park still contains significant Syilx archeological sites and pictographs, and many of the contemporary trails are based on historical trails used by Okanagan people, fur traders, and early settlers. The park has, in effect, placed an additional constraint on the southern expansion of Kelowna’s city boundary, and has contributed to the sense that regardless of its growth, Kelowna remains embedded in a natural environment.

In 1976, in partial response to the growth of Kelowna and as a continuation of claims to their unceded territory throughout the Okanagan Valley and into Washington State, USA, “the Okanagan people met at Head of the Lake to discuss the formation of a new federation of the Okanagan bands.” Out of these meetings, “[t]he Okanagan Nation

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<sup>16</sup> Meligrana (2003: 135) argues that by leaving municipal governments unchanged, the Regional District governance structure represents “a missed opportunity to provide meaningful growth management to the rural-urban fringe areas.”

Alliance (ONA) was formed in 1981 as the inaugural First Nations government in the Okanagan which represents the 8 member communities,” which stretch as far north as Okanagan Indian Band (Vernon), west to the Upper Nicola Band, the Westbank First Nation, south to Penticton Indian Band and Osoyoos Indian Band, and South-east to the Lower and Upper Similkameen Indian Bands, and across the border to the Colville Confederated Tribes. The ONA works collectively to advance and assert Okanagan nation Title and Rights over the Okanagan Nation Territory, including protecting the people (language, culture, and history), the land, and its resources.<sup>17</sup> Functioning originally under the name of the Okanagan Tribal Council, it was reorganized in the 1990s into its present structure and with its present name. The Okanagan leaders signed the Okanagan Nation Declaration in August 1987 at Komasket Park, declaring their sovereignty, and rights over their territory:

We, the Okanagan Nation make this declaration today as a sign for every generation to come. Therefore, we hereby declare that: We are the unconquered aboriginal people of this land, our mother; The creator has given us our mother, to enjoy, to manage and to protect; we, the first inhabitants, have lived with our mother from time immemorial; our Okanagan governments have allowed us to share equally in the resources of our mother; we have never given up our rights to our mother, our mother’s resources, our governments and our religion; we will survive and continue to govern our mother and her resources for the good of all for all time.<sup>18</sup>

Despite these efforts to establish Okanagan Syilx rights over the territory that includes Kelowna and its surroundings, the course of urban development proceeded uninterrupted, extending further and further into agricultural and undeveloped lands. Further development was happening within the agricultural lands, particularly in the slow but significant transition from tree fruits to grape vineyards for wine production. Yet even with amalgamation and an increased pace of growth, Kelowna was still relatively quiet in 1980s. And then, timed to coincide with Vancouver hosting the world Expo ’86, the province opened the Coquihalla highway (Highway 97) to connect Vancouver to Merritt (1986) and on to Kamloops (1987) without having to travel the circuitous route along the

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<sup>17</sup> <http://www.syilx.org/who-we-are/organization-information/>

<sup>18</sup> <http://www.syilx.org/who-we-are/organization-information/declaration/>

Fraser River Canyon. In 1990, the Coquihalla Connector (Highway 97c), “slashed its way through the hills above Peachland” (MacHardy 2005/2006: 93) to connect Kelowna directly to Merritt. Vehicle travel between Vancouver and Kelowna had become safe, convenient, and much faster, with the drive time reduced from six to four hours. Kelowna, and the entire Okanagan Valley, was no longer as isolated geographically, and the boom had begun.

Reflecting on the period, contemporary Kelowna city planner Ron Mattiusi recalled that “[t]raditionally, our demographic was Prairie people retiring from Alberta and Saskatchewan. But the boom of ’88-’95 brought families from the Lower Mainland who could sell their homes there and buy a place in Kelowna and live in a smaller community. From ’95 on we started to see a shift (in Kelowna) from a retirement community to a new demographic for young families” (Parnell 2011). One of the sources for the choice of Kelowna as a desirable location to move to is speculated to be a form of “white flight,” a retreat from the diversification of Vancouver and Calgary to the predominantly “white space” of Kelowna (Aguar et al 2005: 131). The rapid population increases at this time led to rising housing prices and affordability problems, compounded by the limitations on developable land and the challenges of taking agricultural land out of the ALR to allow for further development. To those who had lived in Kelowna prior to the 1980s, it seemed as though the city was changing irrevocably, though urban outsiders still experienced Kelowna as small, quiet, slow, and rural:

It takes about four hours to drive here from Vancouver and the adjustment from the urban rush and push to the more relaxed rural pace of the Okanagan tends to be gradual and deceptive. ...But when you fly into town it’s a 50 minute hop, and the contrast between hustle-bustle Vancouver and easy-going Kelowna is more dramatic. You can actually smell the difference the moment you arrive: the air is sweeter, cleaner. There is a noticeable stillness and spaciousness everywhere; roads seem empty; there is far less noise; people are moving more slowly (Whysall 1992: n.p.)

Kelowna in the mid-1990s was heading into a period of profound transformation, and “...the big question now facing the residents and planners is: how big can Kelowna grow and still be Kelowna? How many newcomers can the town absorb without losing its

unique character or forfeiting the pastoral charm that drew all the newcomers there in the first place?” (Whysall 1992: n.p.). This decade saw the beginning of major investment in the area between the downtown core and the industrial north end, designated as the new “Cultural District” and planned to attract high-rise residential apartments, galleries, theatres, shops and coffee shops, and even the sports and arts arenas. These plans included the rehabilitation of landmark heritage buildings such as the Laurel Packinghouse, which had been a primary site of agricultural processing, re-envisioning them as cultural resources, such as community spaces, an agricultural museum, and a BC wine store. The Cultural District was designed to appeal to “independent, modern city dwellers” (Marten 2009: 148) and thus also to secure Kelowna’s ambition to transform from an agricultural town to a regional urban centre. These transformations in both built form and ideal resident highlight the sense that there were increasing tensions between ideas of what Kelowna was and what it was becoming: a conflict between a sense of homogenous rural community and the possibilities of heterogenous and multiple urban communities, between traditional values and modern, inclusive, secular values, between the formalities of municipal governance and the newer modes of social movement and identity politics. In an exemplary instance in 1997, then Mayor Walter Gray ignited an intense community debate by refusing to proclaim Gay and Lesbian Pride Day in Kelowna, arguing that “he thought doing so would offend many of his constituents” and earning a “rebuke from the B.C. Human Rights Commission, which ruled he had engaged in an act of discrimination” (Seymour 2012: n.p.). If a certain pastoral charm was thought to draw newcomers to Kelowna, it increasingly appeared as though this charm might disappear, and yet if this pastoral charm included such clear decisions on who might be included and excluded from the community, it also increasingly appeared, to some at least, that it was long-since time for Kelowna to outgrow its rural roots.

### **Heyday**

Kelowna had become, it seemed, a frontier boomtown in the wrong century. In the thirty years leading up to the 2006 census, the population more than doubled, from 51,955 in 1976 to 106,707 in 2006, and at the time it was projected that the population would double again in the next 30 years, though with the pace of growth expected to slow

somewhat over that period (from a high of 3% per year in the early 1990s to a projected 0.9% by 2036) (COEDC 2009). The population density of Kelowna, always relatively low for its population, was also starting to increase, jumping from 455 people per square kilometre in 2001 to 504 people per square kilometre in 2006 (COEDC 2009). The centennial of the incorporation of Kelowna occurred in 2005, and the Kelowna Art Gallery mounted *Oasis*, a centennial exhibition of Kelowna artwork. It was curated to “explore Kelowna, a burgeoning city in a semi-desert landscape that encompasses a very large lake, as an oasis or place of refuge and retreat for those who live and visit here,” while trying to recognize and bring to light how “even an oasis can have a dark side” (MacHardy 2005/2006: 93).

The growth was not contained within the city boundaries of Kelowna, as the challenges of urban/rural fringe development of previous decades prefigured, and the response to huge demand for new housing was significant residential and commercial development of the unincorporated lands both outside Kelowna, and in the unincorporated lands on the west side of Okanagan lake, in Westbank and surrounding communities. In December 2007, Westbank and its outlying neighbourhoods rejected the possibility of amalgamating with the city of Kelowna, and chose instead to incorporate as the District of West Kelowna.<sup>19</sup> As both a response to development on the west side, and a factor in ensuring ongoing development, a new five-lane bridge was opened in 2008 to replace the original 1958 structure, improving traffic flow through the city but also ensuring access to and from West Kelowna and the communities beyond. Much of the development on the west side of the lake has been undertaken on lands owned by the Westbank First Nation, including both residential communities and extensive commercial properties along the highway. While some consider the development of WFN lands a positive addition to the central Okanagan (Paterson 2012a), others find it replicates the worst elements of Kelowna’s strip mall sprawl: a former Vancouver city councilor and urban expert Gordon Price noted that Kelowna was the worst example of being “‘malled’ to death... And now from what I’ve seen in West Kelowna, it’s even worse. It’s bad

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<sup>19</sup> The fight over whether to retain the historic name Westbank for the newly incorporated district, or choose a new name, was particularly fierce. Anecdotally, Westbank was thought to have been rejected as a name because of its association with being a lower-class, resource based community of loggers, miners, and mill-workers, which was feared would lower housing values for new, prosperous, lake side residences.

development on steroids” (Cooper 2013). Regardless of whether the built forms look any different, or whether those built forms are considered good or ill from an urban planning standpoint, the extensive development of land owned by the Westbank First Nation is underpinned by a different structure of land ownership derived from a unique self-governance agreement between WFN and the Government of Canada (Vogl 2013).

Three other factors are generally cited as being essential to the rapid growth of Kelowna in this period and markers of Kelowna’s transition into a proper city. First, the airport on the north end of the city underwent a series of expansions which increased both the number of flights and size of aircraft it could process: it became easier to fly in and out of Kelowna, and direct flights became available to more distant destinations across Canada, into the United States, and beyond. Second, as the primary urban centre between the Lower Mainland and Calgary, there was extensive investment in and development of Kelowna’s institutions for postsecondary education. The existing Okanagan University College was split into Okanagan College, which focused on trades and technical training, and the academic programs were amalgamated with the University of British Columbia, becoming a satellite campus under the name of University of British Columbia – Okanagan (UBCO). By 2014, the student population was over 8,000, including more than 600 graduate students, and by 2015 there were over 350 tenure-stream permanent faculty and almost 200 non-tenure temporary faculty. Finally, the health sector expanded, both in primary care and administration, as Kelowna became the centre of the Interior Health Authority (the regional provincial administrative unit) and the hospital grew to become the core health services centre outside Vancouver. Since 2000, new developments have included a cancer care and research centre, a rebuilt emergency and triage unit, and a newly opened cardiac surgery centre, the only one in BC outside the Vancouver region.

These changes, regardless whether seen as positive or negative, brought with them a sense that Kelowna was taken up by rapid, even rampant, urban transformation. As an article at the time pondered: “Development. Turn a corner in our city these days and a new building project will probably be staring you in the face. ...[It raises the question of] what ever happened to quiet old Kelowna?” (Parnell 2007: n.p.). Kelowna had gone from being one of the less important rural communities in the valley to being the urban centre. Considering what combination of factors contributed to Kelowna’s

momentum, the vice-president of an Albertan development company with projects in the city mused that “[m]any Alberta companies and from other parts of the country and perhaps other parts of the world look to this valley as having great potential. Primarily because there is a lot of already existing infrastructure. The lake is a huge draw. You have an international airport, you have the wine industry. When you put all of those things together, it’s a nice picture for the baby boomer crowd. The influx of people, in my view, has just started. This valley is headed for significant economic growth over the next 20 years” (Randy Sieben, Vice-President, Kelowna region, Melcor Black Mountain golf course community; quoted in Parnell 2007: n.p.). In the midst of this boom in construction, “...skyrocketing land prices inspire[d] old timers to sell out to Albertan retirees and affluent Vancouverites” (Hessing 2010/2011: 127). Thus, not only was the population of Kelowna growing; with it came a sense of a shifting composition of the population and a shifting identity for the city.

These extensive and intensive changes in built form, in economic and cultural base, and in population were welcomed by some, heavily decried by many, and openly fought against by some, with the focus primarily on specific development proposals: “[a] lot of people have protested against a lot of projects around Kelowna, [afraid of an] evil empire being constructed in what was once a quiet community where everybody knew your name” (Parnell 2007: n.p.). Calls for the development or redevelopment and revitalization of certain areas, particularly in the downtown core, were perceived by some as strategies to remove transient orchard workers, homeless and street involved people, and anyone else who did not fit within Kelowna’s image of a burgeoning, world-class urban centre (Marten 2009): “...when the cops finally moved in there was no pretense that the move was anything but a police sweep to get the homeless off the streets and out of the public view,” but “enforcement ...alone is not enough to rebuilt [sic] the public’s appreciation of, and desire to return, to Kelowna’s downtown core” (Waters 2005: n.p.). Such practices, regardless of intention, recall Kelowna’s history of difficult, often discriminatory relations with minorities (visible or otherwise) and marginalized groups.

Of all the contentious development proposals, the one that mobilized the most extensive public debate on the form and future of Kelowna as a growing city was the significant plan for a zoning bylaw that would guide the comprehensive redevelopment of

a four-block zone in the downtown core (known as the Comprehensive Development Zone or CD21 Zone, this plan is brought into direct focus in Essay Four). The proposal sought to increase allowable building heights and density in this lakeside zone, galvanizing many who felt that this was precisely the sort of urban development that would confirm Kelowna's transformation into a real city, and galvanizing many others who felt that Vancouver-styled glass high rises on the waterfront would serve only to benefit those who could afford the premium condo real estate (particularly out-of-town purchasers of second, seasonal properties). The debate led to the longest public hearing in Kelowna's history, as speakers both for and against stretched long past midnight. In the early hours of the morning, council eventually voted to proceed with the planning. Community opposition remained and translated, in the municipal elections in the fall of 2008, into a dramatic shift in council composition.<sup>20</sup> The new council voted against the proposal on its fourth and final reading.

The highly vocal and visible debate over the CD21 Zone amplified interest in the concurrent update to the Official Community Plan, which was pursued under the title *Greening our Future: OCP 2030* (Kelowna 2011b). The document contextualizes itself by describing how “[p]rovincial legislation (Local Government Act) outlines the purpose, required content and discretionary content of an OCP. The purpose of an OCP, under this legislation, is a ‘statement of objectives and policies to guide decisions on planning and land use management’” (Kelowna 2008c: 2). The OCP is developed and adopted by the municipal government, usually on the basis of extensive public consultation. Through this process, the OCP is said to contain “a municipality’s goals, objectives and policies guiding growth and change.”<sup>21</sup> Further, the OCP is “adopted as a bylaw and therefore becomes a binding document for Council and staff decisions” (Kelowna 2011b: 1.2). While Kelowna’s OCP was written within its regional context, including both regional growth projections and the legal requirements of the regional planning board (Kelowna 2011b: 2.1), it is not legally required to acknowledge or align with the planning goals of

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<sup>20</sup> In this election, the Mayor Sharon Shepherd was re-elected, but the majority of new councilors had an explicit focus on sustainable development that included a reluctance to accept the CD21 Zone proposal in its existing state. At fourth and final reading, further revisions were no longer possible, and so the vote went against the proposal.

<sup>21</sup> An OCP is legally required for all incorporated areas (city, town, village); Electoral Areas (EAs) can; and regional districts can but are not legally obliged (Meligrana 2003: 135).

adjacent OCPs, whether of neighbouring municipalities or of the electoral areas that define the administrative units of the unincorporated communities (Meligrana 2000: n.p.).<sup>22</sup>

The text of *Greening our Future: Kelowna 2030* explicitly prioritizes the social, environmental, and economic sustainability of Kelowna. It was the result of more than two years of public meetings, information sessions, surveys, and other techniques designed to elicit engagement and feedback. The “green” vision of Kelowna is of “a vibrant city where the agricultural and beautiful natural setting, community spirit, economic stability, and stewardship of the environment enhance the quality of life for residents” (Kelowna 2009a: 4). Sustainability is defined in the OCP as “creating the best balance between environmental protection, economic growth, social development and cultural vibrancy” (Kelowna 2011b: 4-5), and concern with the sustainability of Kelowna’s growth is the explicit foundation of the plan’s principles, strategies, and policy development. Its sustainability initiatives are focused on “land use, transportation, and infrastructure [as] ... the core decisions that the OCP is meant to help guide” (Kelowna 2011b: 5), as delimited by provincial legislation.

After decades of suburban developments stretching up hillsides and over agricultural land, and due to growing concerns over sprawl, *Greening our Future: Kelowna 2030* emphasizes the need to channel the predicted growth of Kelowna into a more definitively ‘urban’ form:

In the creating of what’s generally viewed as the road map to future development, planners focused on how they would meet a rising demand for housing, and it seemed the answer lay in multi-family developments. ... Around 50 per cent of new development and 80 per cent of new multiple family residential developments will be concentrated within urban-ish hubs within the city (Michaels 2011a: n.p.).

The current OCP suggests that Kelowna can indeed become urban, that it can shed the vestigial forms that organized small town life into particular land use patterns and

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<sup>22</sup> But the Growth Strategies Act “does require a municipality to prepare a regional context statement, that must identify the relationship between the OCP and the regional growth strategy (s.866 [1]). The Act, however, does not clearly state whether the OCP governing unincorporated parts of the regional district should also contain context statements” (Meligrana 2000: n.p.)

architectural structures and develop a truly urban form adequate to its increased population and transformed identity. But while the downtown waterfront and civic and cultural districts “look like a planner’s dream come true, ... every place has its problems,” (Donnelly 2008: n.p.) and Kelowna’s distinctively decentred growth patterns and cultural and economic contexts may not be easy to overcome:

Once away from the water, parts of the downtown are not very attractive, even quite dull. The city is bisected by a six lane highway...Housing is very expensive, especially for young people and first time buyers. ...large parts of the city have ideal building lands that are protected agricultural areas. This means some new housing subdivisions are built up hillsides that would normally be second choice for such construction (Donnelly 2008: n.p.)

From an external view, Kelowna’s hillsides may seem like a second choice, as they pose significant challenges to residential development services and housing construction (particularly since the OCP developed more stringent bylaws for hillsides above a certain gradient). However, in Kelowna the hillside neighbourhoods are highly desirable, because of spectacular views of the lake, the valley, and the mountains beyond. Such properties are the most expensive and prestigious real estate in the city, and their marketing is most explicit in the focus on leisure, privilege, and whiteness (Aguiar et al.: 2005). So, whether in the suburbs, increasingly criticized as examples of unsustainable urban sprawl and discriminating exclusivity, or in the downtown developments, criticized for being too urban too fast, or in such clashes between changing populations and still-dominant ideas of what kind of community Kelowna was and should become, conflict and debate was everywhere, if not always at the surface. There was, indeed, trouble in the dream of the paradise ‘oasis’, the dark side that MacHardy (2005/2006) draws out of the retrospective centennial exhibition at KAG.

### **Economic collapse**

For many, the Okanagan development boom brought wealth and opportunity. But while there was the perception that “[m]ost of us are thinking how we can hop on the money train before it all comes crashing down or runs us over” (Parnell 2007: n.p.), for many others, limited employment opportunities and the gap between wages and property

prices meant that the train had already barrelled down on them. The boom had created and intensified the marginalization of disparate communities, including foreign temporary workers, displaced street-involved, and those precariously housed who were losing affordable homes (particularly mobile homes and small bungalows in the downtown, Pandosy/Mission, and north end neighbourhoods) to redevelopment. When the housing bubble burst, it burst in the United States first, in a series of domino disasters set off by a mortgage crisis. The effects were global, and the reverberations resonated through Kelowna. From 2008 to 2010 there is a media silence about development projects, a gap in the series of ongoing articles that signals the pause in activity. Property values declined, though not radically.<sup>23</sup> While “[t]he economy seemingly flatlined since the crash of 2009,” city officials observed that “... economic drivers like UBC Okanagan, Okanagan College, the airport and Interior Health Authority – which collectively bring \$2 billion a year to the area – are tools in the arsenal to full recovery and have likely softened the blow to the economy” (Michaels 2012a: n.p.). Kelowna residents, perhaps made nervous by the evidence of economic fragility, voted another comprehensive change in the municipal elections of fall 2011, choosing to return to Mayor Walter Gray (who had been Mayor in the mid-90s during the onset of the boom) and replace the sustainability-oriented council with one explicitly focused on a development agenda. According to Robert Fine, Executive Director of the Central Okanagan Development Commission, this resulted in a perception of change in the business and development climate: “developers, tourist operators and even long lost Alberta investors are putting out feelers, and while feelers aren’t the same as dollars, just their interest piqued has been encouraging” (Michaels 2012a: n.p.). Ron Mattiusi, the city manager at this time, “was less bullish on economic prospects than Fine, predict[ing] four to five years of turbulence. ...[and] continual affordability challenges in years to come” (Michaels 2012a: n.p.).

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<sup>23</sup> Land values and housing developments have increased apace with the population. Median new home prices rose from \$125,000 in 1990, to \$180,000 in 1996, to a high of \$599,900 in 2008, and then declined somewhat to \$575,000 in 2011 (forecasted) before rising again to a forecasted \$585,000 in 2012. New housing starts have ranged from around 1,000 to almost 3,000 through the early 2000s, followed by a sharp decline in 2009 and subsequent slow rise to a forecasted 1,200 starts in 2014 (CMHC 2013).

The reverberations of the economic collapse appear to have raised, in a way that was largely absent before, the issue of Kelowna in the world. The vision for Kelowna expands from a concern with sustainability to a concern with becoming “[a] creative city [that can be] a competitive city in the global marketplace, and a welcoming, attractive home for a diverse population” (Michaels 2010: n.p.). Language across a diverse range of practices and institutions maintains a remarkably consistent focus on “enhance[ing] Kelowna’s identity nationally and internationally” (Kelowna 2010: 304-305) by becoming “world-class:” claims include streetscapes (Kelowna 2012: A-1), cultural and educational facilities (RCA n.d.; Squire 2013), and health care services (BC/IHA 2012). Kelowna’s concern with its own urbanization process manifests in explicit visions of the city it hopes to become, visions which emphasize in particular the need to become or remain a unique “place” in an increasingly global world: “Culture is changing rapidly as global travel, immigration, and emigration increase. More and more communities are becoming ‘nowhere places’ as they fail to develop a unique sense of place, often accommodating a high number of national or international franchise-type businesses” (Kelowna 2008c: n.p.). This focus suggests increased practices of competitive commodification (Aguilar et al. 2005), particularly when the distinctive historical narratives, geographical features and cultural practices of Kelowna are used to generate built and aesthetic forms that are thought to make the city more attractive to capital investment and creative class migration. The emphasis on place-making that increasingly permeates city planning, economic development, and cultural and educational strategies and policies highlights not only a prominent desire to ensure that Kelowna becomes a “world-class” destination, but also a more generalized awareness of the narrative of global economic restructuring driving urbanization.

## **Now**

The City of Kelowna has had a vision guiding its growth, of “a vibrant city where the agricultural and beautiful natural setting, community spirit, economic stability, and stewardship of the environment enhance the quality of life for residents” (Kelowna 2008c: 4). This growth is projected to continue for decades to come, and if it may not be at the white-hot pace of the start of the millennium, it is still assumed that “[t]he

Okanagan Valley, the third largest concentration of population in the province, is fast-tracked for continued growth and prosperity” (Hessing 2010/2011: 122). The factors in Kelowna’s growth are diverse. The new hospital and expanding health care services and administration generate increased employment and construction (Parnell 2011: n.p.). Okanagan College and the University of British Columbia - Okanagan continue to attract more students, and the UBCO campus is the site of significant investment in new buildings (Parnell 2011: n.p.). The Central Okanagan Economic Development Commission states that “Kelowna continues to be one of the fastest growing cities in BC with manufacturing, high technology, health care, tourism and post-secondary education sectors in particular attracting new business and residents to the area. [It is] the largest centre for urban development, business, commercial, retail, and health care services between the Lower Mainland and Calgary” (COEDC 2009: 1). And finally, the agricultural diversification into viticulture and the economic diversification into high technology leads to efforts to market Kelowna as ‘Silicon Vineyard’ (CBC 2001: n.p.). Even taking into account the COEDC’s institutionally-driven optimism as a mode of business development, it is clear that Kelowna is now established as the metropolitan centre not only for the Okanagan Valley, but for much of the Southern interior of British Columbia.

Keeping pace with this growth, the population for the Central Okanagan region is expected to reach almost 250,000 by 2030, and “[a] traditional City share of regional population of 66.5% would generate a Kelowna 2030 projected population of 161,701 at an average annual growth rate of 1.51 %” (Kelowna 2011b: 2.1), although “...there will be fluctuations in that growth rate over time that in some instances might be quite volatile [and] [i]t is impossible to anticipate the nature of the fluctuations” (Kelowna 2011b: 3.1). Despite Kelowna’s international economic linkages and its marketing as an international tourist destination, the majority of residential growth is still due to intraprovincial and interprovincial migration (COEDC 2015: 15). The pattern of Kelowna primarily attracting older, retired or semi-retired residents is expected to continue (Kelowna 2011b: 3.2). So, too, is the pattern of Kelowna being a resort community, attracting holiday-makers and second-home owners, and a bedroom community for people with jobs in Vancouver, Victoria, Calgary, and north with the oil and mining industries. These

fluctuating residencies make it challenging to establish population counts and housing requirements, even when hotel apartments for seasonal residents are counted separately in the planning process (Kelowna 2011b: 3.3). In other words, just as for many residents, Kelowna as a city is not fully ‘here,’ for many other residents, they themselves are here but not fully here.

Kelowna has continued to be known primarily as a retirement and resort destination (Grant and Bohdanow 2008: 122). The attractive scenery, temperate climate, abundant opportunities for leisure activities, and increasingly easy access to both major cities and remote wilderness, have led it to experience first-hand the growing trend towards “amenity migration” (Chipeniuk 2004). The migrating population has been predominantly white, with only five percent of the population identifying as visible minority and a further 6,000 self-identifying as aboriginal (COEDC 2009: 18). This lack of diversity is mobilized and amplified through the active marketing of Kelowna as a white safe haven (Aguiar and Marten 2011; Aguiar et al. 2005). City planning documents, particularly the OCP and the cultural plan, make reference to including diverse social groups and suggest an opening to and acceptance of previously marginalized populations, but economic development strategies to encourage newcomers follow two distinct paths: one recruits immigrants from Western Europe with a promise of fast-tracked permanent resident status and the ability to sponsor family members; the other recruits temporary workers, primarily from Mexico for orchard work and Jamaica for construction work, offering only 5-7 month work visas and restricting any possibility of sponsoring family (Kataoka and Magnusson 2011: 266). Kelowna remains remarkably homogenous for a city of its size and growth rate within Canada and BC, and while these temporary workers pose a highly visible challenge to Kelowna’s composition and self-identification as a predominantly white city, the usually temporary nature of their presence also serves to confirm this image. The perception that Kelowna is becoming an increasingly urbanized, and therefore dense and diverse, city, has brought these conflicts and tensions into full view.<sup>24</sup> In a particularly concentrated example, in 2007-2008 114

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<sup>24</sup> In some accounts, Kelowna’s proportion of visible minorities has increased marginally in the past 5-8 years. In other accounts, it has decreased. However, the visibility of any minority groups, particularly those from Jamaica, has brought a *perception* of radical change, regardless whether this perception fits with statistical counts or not.

Black Jamaican students were welcomed by Okanagan College, adding much-needed international fees to the institution, and twenty-six temporary Jamaican labourers arrived “to take up jobs left vacant in a red hot regional economy with limited labour market options” (Aguiar et al. 2010/2011: 65). These arrivals, highly visible in a city with only a minimal visible minority population, caused enough concern that they were subjected to a range of policies to control their behaviours and “ensure their safety” (such as curfews and other restrictions) and became the instigation for explicitly and subtly racist and racialized as articles, op-eds, and letters to editors in local media (Aguiar et al. 2010/2011; Tedesco forthcoming).

Similarly, despite the history of rapid growth, Kelowna is only slowly developing the built forms that are typically associated with the urban. In many ways, it still reflects its recent identity as a regional town: 57 percent of Kelowna’s housing is in the form of single-family dwellings, compared with 49 percent for the province as a whole; and 19% is in the form of apartments (compared with 29% for the province) of which only 1.2% are apartment buildings with more than five storeys (compared with 7.9% for the province). Reflecting the relative rate of growth in Kelowna, 49% of all dwellings in the city were constructed in the past twenty years (compared with 38% in the province as a whole) (COEDC 2009: 62). This growth, which has primarily taken the form of low-density suburban residential and commercial development, has put severe pressure on the agricultural land base of Kelowna. Only relatively recently has Kelowna experienced the drive to densify and ‘grow up’ (Momer 1998) that has traditionally been used to characterize the urban against the rural. In Kelowna’s planning debates, height is considered a primary indicator of ‘urban’ status, and vertical building heights have taken over from horizontal suburban spread as the lightning rod for vigorous contention. Just as frequently, Kelowna is still subject to frontier-style development mentalities, such as the Kelowna Mountain Resort, outside the Kelowna city boundary but within the Central Okanagan Regional District. The owner and developer has proceeded to begin construction of a ski hill, golf course, winery and residential community without development approval, not only raising issues of rural/urban fringe development interface, but of the limitations of local government planning and authority.

Despite the ways in which Kelowna does not easily satisfy many standard identifications of the urban, it is subject to increasing claims about its status as a real or proper city. In positive terms, proponents of Kelowna's urban claims point to the revitalization of Bernard Avenue, the main street through downtown, and the upcoming construction of a new downtown office complex for Interior Health, as important confirmations of Kelowna's commitment to transform into a unique, livable, walkable, workable, enjoyable urban centre. In negative terms, others argue that Kelowna must now also deal with the way that this transformation brings with it the problems of being a 'real' city: homelessness and poverty are intensifying concerns (Michaels 2011d: n.p.), as are illegal drugs and organized crime, including a high profile public shooting, visible Hell's Angel presence, and extensive marijuana cultivation in residential houses and in the surrounding mountains (Cooper 2013). On the one hand, the city that Kelowna is, or will imminently become, is presented as an urbanized version of the rural oasis of its past: a community bound together by the values of hard work, improvement through culture and leisure, embedded within an unspoiled natural environment. On the other hand, this now or future city is presented as subject to all the ills of metropolitan urban life: uncontrollable growth, unpredictable diversity, disorder and discontent, and the destruction of the very environment that should sustain it.

## **Locating the urbanization of Kelowna**

### **The clarity of transition narratives**

In a literal translation from its Latin roots, urbanization means the process of becoming like or being made like the urban. The emphasis, derived from the suffix *-ation*, is on the *process* itself as much as the product. The urban has formed a variably defined reference point, and thus urbanization has been a variably defined process. Early accounts of urbanization focused on the absolute or proportional growth of population, of developed land, and of the density and complexity of urban settlements. More recent accounts have focused on identifying urbanization in and through transitioning geographies, histories, economies, cultures, and politics. These transformations are so

profound that the question is raised whether any of the traditional transition narratives of urbanization are still relevant to understanding the processes and products of contemporary global urbanization. Despite these doubts about the causes, effects, and even the very terms of contemporary global urbanization, the urbanization of Kelowna is still, primarily, explained according to a series of common transition narratives.

#### *From rural to urban*

The primary transition narrative of the urbanization of Kelowna is of the transformation of Kelowna from a rural settlement to an urban centre. This claim is based on sheer growth in population, housing, land boundaries, and the City's transition to 'metropolitan centre' status on the federal census (Marten 2009). It is also based on its relative, proportional growth: on the way that Kelowna has outstripped other communities in the valley, on its growth rates that compare to much larger metropolitan areas, and on the local perception (whether true or not) that everything happening between Vancouver and Calgary is happening here. The claim about Kelowna's transition from rural to urban can also be made in more purely historical institutional terms, from its initial status as an unincorporated Mission settlement, to its early days of incorporation as a very small town site, and through its expansions and amalgamations to the present scale of the City of Kelowna and its place within the Central Okanagan Regional District. In turn, Kelowna is shaping and being shaped by transitioning institutions, from changing provincial legislation and planning policies and tools (the Agricultural Land Reserve, forced amalgamation, the growth of regional governance bodies) to the incorporation of fringe communities (recently West Kelowna, with ongoing debates in communities to the south and east of Kelowna). All of these have shaped the boundaries and terms of Kelowna's rural land use and more recent urban status, and all are grappling in various ways with rural to urban transitions and rural/urban fringe developments. In definitional terms, extensive rural to urban transitions can be chronologically mapped to the period after 1977, when the ALR developed mechanisms for processing requests to remove land for other purposes. Kelowna has increased its developable land time after time by applying for, and receiving, permission to remove land from the ALR, including an extensive 220 hectares in 1998 to accommodate North Glenmore residential developments (Momer 1998). In Kelowna the loss of agricultural land has been subtle

and piecemeal in some ways, as with shifts from agriculture to agritourism and rural to exurban settlement patterns, but also very planned, deliberate, and quantifiable in other ways, on massive, formalized scales.

Along with these delimited land use-based definitions of rural to urban transitions are those that are more broadly geographic in their categories and practices. The built forms of Kelowna have been transforming along with the changing land use, from the infrastructure and architecture of a small regional town to an increasing investment in high rise towers as a means not only of accommodating growth without sprawl but also of creating an appropriately urban skyline and developing a unique, place-based urban design aesthetic (Kelowna 2011a and 2011b). The landscape is similarly transforming: old tree-fruit orchards are being ripped out and replaced by dwarf varieties, vineyards, and monster houses; old irrigation flumes decay while new irrigation and water use technologies enable dangerously increased levels of consumption; hillsides of grass and ponderosa pine are built over and re-created as all-new ‘natural’ communities; and jarring, displaced reminders of Kelowna’s rural existence – from decrepit lakeside walks and piers to decaying cabins and sheds in alleyways throughout downtown – make way for glistening, master-planned, carefully designed urban amenities. Developments along the highway corridor, particularly the Orchard Park Shopping Centre, have challenged downtown as the ‘centre’ of the city, with many feeling that these shifts have been “[s]ucking the life out of downtown” (Waters 2005: n.p.). Despite the resulting revitalization projects in the downtown core, it is possible, now, to argue that “[w]hile there has been millions spent and considerable time and energy expended on revitalizing Kelowna’s downtown core, the reality today is the downtown core is not the centre of the city” (Gerding 2010: n.p.). Vertically, the few tower developments are recent,<sup>25</sup> marking the dream of “Kelowna’s future metropolitan skyline ...[and] a sharp departure – though not unprecedented – from the 16-storey height maximum set by the City of Kelowna zoning” (Smith 2006: n.p.); any attempts to build higher than existing structures remains incredibly contentious (Michaels 2011b).

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<sup>25</sup> In 2006, the Watermark, a 26 storey tower newly constructed on the boundary between downtown and the north end, was the tallest building in the city.

The temptation to map these changes is strong, but the rural to urban transition narratives are as much temporal as spatial. Kelowna was once considered “away from the hustle and bustle” (Whysall 1992: n.p.) of urban life, and “Kelowna time” (Gerding 2010: n.p.) has continued to be experienced as slow motion: a downtown business owner, commenting at a public hearing on a development proposal, felt that “downtown Kelowna is at a standstill. ...I feel like Kelowna has stopped in time ... this town is boring” (Michaels 2012b). And yet there is also the sense that time has transformed, and speeded up, at least for some people: that “[b]oom-times vastly changed the needs and landscape of the area” (Michaels 2011c) because, as argued by a resident of McKinley Landing said during debates over a proposed development in this isolated lakeside neighbourhood, “you can’t stop progress’ ...[e]ven if the progress is in our own backyard” (Parnell 2007). The sense of boom times leading to transitions that are moving faster and faster signal the extent to which urbanization is increasingly seen as having economic causes and economic effects, but also prefigures the myriad spatiotemporal assumptions that are used to distinguish the rural from the urban.

#### *From nature to culture*

If Kelowna is embedded in complex processes of transformation and transition that can be defined as urbanization by many traditional measures and definitions, it also finds its urbanization narrative grounded in the many cognate categories that have been used in complex ways to delineate urban versus rural and to identify which is which in any given context. The most obvious parallel in the transition narrative of urbanization in Kelowna is from rural and urban to nature and culture. In direct terms, the claim is made about a long-term historical transition: from Indigenous nations that were highly mobile over their land and, in the dismissive terms of colonial encounter, themselves part of the natural environment (the better to support the doctrine of *terra nullius* and justify occupation through the promise of development); to the rural practices that were seen as an integration with nature (orcharding was a means of living with the land, the seasons, and the bounty [Bennett 1998]), and maintaining extensive tracts of ‘undeveloped’, and thus ‘natural’ landscape); to the urban growth of Kelowna as an absorption of nature into large scale cultural production, whether economic, institutional, architectural, or artistic. The narrative of Kelowna’s urbanization as a transition from nature to culture therefore

includes some diverse and diffused forms, derived from the intensification of practices, developments, constructions, that are said to make a place and its people properly urban: the offerings of the Cultural District, the activities of the post-secondary institutions, and the ability to bring artists and a viable cultural industry to Kelowna and to convey it outwards.<sup>26</sup> Within this narrative, nature remains strongly identified as and through the landscape, and culture takes primarily the specific forms associated with urban gentrification (Zukin 1995), both of which are significantly influenced in Kelowna by the dominant imaginaries of whiteness (Bennett 1998, Aguiar et al. 2005, Aguiar and Marten 2011). Even the continual claims to offer residents events and activities that are more open and more multicultural have a tendency to exoticize otherness and restrict possibilities for diverse identities to ‘cultural’ markers such as ‘costume’, dance, food, and music. This narrative has both positive and negative inflections, generating both nostalgia for a previous time in Kelowna’s history when the balance between nature and culture was struck, and dreams of a future time when, though the efforts to achieve sustainable development, the balance might be regained.

*From local to global*

Similarly, Kelowna’s chronology of urbanization can be narrated as a transition from local to global, from a place disconnected from the world and unincorporated, both figuratively and literally, to a fully incorporated urban centre with links to other significant urban centres around the globe.<sup>27</sup> In figurative terms, it was isolated, not bound up within geographically, economically, or politically diverse structures, and it was minimally connected to a broader outside world through routes of transportation and communication (Harris 1997). In literal political terms, ‘Kelowna’ was also not yet incorporated: given the status, from a higher sovereign authority, of a community body bound to its place and bound to other places through this system of vertical and horizontal authority. With incorporation came the institutional embodiment of the

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<sup>26</sup> Examples range from the Streaming Café to local poet Shane Koyzin performing at the opening of the Olympics to Kelowna-born, New York-based artist Erin Shirreff winning a major international prize from the Art Gallery of Ontario, to the sale of locally-developed Club Penguin to Disney, which had the effect of creating a new philanthropic family in Kelowna.

<sup>27</sup> To reiterate, this is presented as a dominant narrative, not a description of fact; and as a narrative, it maintains the Eurocentricity and colonial attitudes that are woven through Kelowna’s history and development.

distinctive identities claimed by Kelowna and its adjacent settlements, each of which was resolutely 'local' vis-à-vis the others. Over the years, this sense of isolation has been lost to a perception of the need to promote and enable easy access to Kelowna, and easy access out. The success of Kelowna, the viability of Kelowna, is recognized as being influenced by global factors and dependent on the global situation – economic, definitely, but also social, cultural, political. In this context, being successful means being known globally and being acknowledged as 'world-class' in those areas that Kelowna has chosen to specialize in: wineries and agritourism, leisure and recreation, and a particular vision of "the good life." What 'local' means, and what being local entails, takes on a specialized meaning and specialized purpose within this new global context, to great extent subsumed and put to work to market Kelowna to the world.

*From traditional to modern*

The urbanization of Kelowna can also be framed in terms of a transition from traditional to modern, the temporal structure of the linear, progressive movement of development and advancement. In Kelowna, the narrative of a transition from tradition to modern involves a double set of claims. The first claims a transition from the 'traditional' ways of life of the Indigenous Syilx people to the modern, civilized ways of life brought by the settlers, as celebrated on a commemorative plaque at the summit Pioneer Pavilion on Knox Mountain, in the north end of town. The second claims a transition from the traditional, rural, agricultural ways of life of Kelowna's settlers to the complex, modern, urban lifestyles of the current (and future) inhabitants: those who make their lives within the growing proportion of high rises and densified town homes in the downtown core, the Cultural district, and the designated urban centres. These are the residents who participate in the planning vision of an urbanized Kelowna as a place to 'live, work and play'. Similarly, the transformation of agricultural lands and practices is also coded in these temporal terms: from traditional expanses of trees in longstanding orchards with older varieties of apples and pears, irrigated with flume-guided water from high in the hills, to new dwarf varieties, trees barely feet apart, supplied with modern irrigation techniques; and the replacement of traditional tree fruits with modern, urbane vineyards and wineries.

*From homogenous to heterogeneous*

The standard narrative that urbanization brings with it a transition from homogeneity to heterogeneity is less simple in Kelowna. Its incorporation was based in claims of shared roots (in the United Kingdom) and a shared endeavor, but also assumed a shared world-view, forms and knowledge and learning, and sense of identity. In Kelowna, more so than even other frontier settlements of the same period, this commitment to homogeneity took the form of an emphasis on a white community and the explicit promise that white residents would be safe from encounters with difference (Aguiar et al. 2005). This desire to develop Kelowna as a homogenous community is still maintained, though usually more subtly, but particular moments of tension enable these views to manifest in overt, particularly ugly ways. The emphasis on increasing diversity, in social, cultural, and subjective terms, is limited, and often conflates welcoming the new ‘global’ presence of Kelowna in the world with recognizing visible minorities as a ‘new’ addition to the community. But the economic, institutional, and geographic transitions that lead to this limited notion of ‘diversifying’ Kelowna (a notion that patronizes both existing minority communities and those who might arrive in Kelowna as newcomers) are already diversifying Kelowna in the range of ways previously narrated. Many of these changes seem to amplify each other or necessarily coexist, and yet other changes seem to challenge and undo each other. With all these myriad transitions come transitions in the identities, subjectivities, and practices of Kelowna residents, many of whom have no historical or familial affiliation to the sleepy agricultural outpost of the past, many of whom hold significant affection for this imaginary of a rural idyll (whether through historical ties or complicated projections), many of whom are eager to be part of building Kelowna into a “shimmering” (Aguiar and Marten 2011) urban oasis for a certain leisure-oriented (read white) population, and many of whom are actively or implicitly working to create spaces in Kelowna for alternative visions of identity and urbanity, on whatever basis. Again, these diversifications and heterogeneities are seen in both positive and negative terms, and tend to generate both backward-casting and forward-looking forms of idealization and demonization.

*From (colonial) development to urbanization*

A distinctive feature of this narrative of the chronological history of this place becoming the City of Kelowna and the extended city of Kelowna – a feature telling but certainly not unique – is the emphasis on development rather than urbanization. Development in the Western context has entailed, at its most basic, the sense of advancement through progressive stages, particularly economic stages, and more recently and more specifically, the improvement of real estate and other properties and resources. The form of the word, with the suffix *-ment* modifying the verb *develop*, captures and emphasizes the end result or product of the processes and practices, rather than just the process itself. In one sense, development appears as a broader phenomenon, and a broader label, than urbanization, insofar as it encompasses economic, social, cultural, and even personal advancement. In another sense, development is much narrower than urbanization, precisely because of the way in which *advancement* is continually defined in progressive, linear terms. The economic element of development – adding value, incorporating into practices of production, exchange and capitalization – easily dominates Kelowna’s chronological narrative, and the use of ‘development’ as a specific real estate term coincides with the initial period of British settlement in Kelowna. Development, in the dual sense of advancing progress and of productivity, has continued to be the dominant perspective on what is required, and what it means, to *settle* Kelowna (a perspective that is well-documented as being violently incompatible with Syilx perspectives on being on and with the land). The development of Kelowna is intimately, inextricably tied to the colonial history of Kelowna, as part of the western frontier of the displacement of Indigenous peoples, settlement by European immigrants, and promotion of a particular imaginary of civilization. While the language of civilization has a longer political history, the modern European definition of “civilization” drew a boundary between those “ordered” subjects that could live peacefully in modern, Western, urban conditions of density and difference (Freud 2004; Brown 2006), and those that could not. Such beliefs about and imaginaries of cities, whiteness and civilization were crucial in the

colonial settlement of Canada, and the settlement, incorporation, and development of Kelowna must be understood within this history.<sup>28</sup>

The limitations of ‘development’ are implicitly recognized in the contemporary language of sustainable development, which dominates Kelowna’s OCP and other planning documents and policy statements: on the one hand, the process of specifying social and ecological goals of sustainability as part of a vision of development highlights how the economic has been primary; and on the other hand, the way that sustainable development still tends to mobilize a sense of linear progress towards an advanced urban future highlights how powerful the economically-derived, spatiotemporal narrative of development is. In recent years, the small but significant transition in Kelowna from a narrow identification of development – real estate, building projects, and the construction industry – towards a broader sense of urbanization appears as a small but significant transition beyond the frontier mentality that has dominated Kelowna. As one local editorial put it, “[l]et us stop painting Kelowna’s economic future around the development of real estate, downtown or anywhere else. We need to be thinking far more outside the box than that” (Gerding 2011). Here and elsewhere, people are looking to health care, to the university, and to entrepreneurial ventures to secure Kelowna’s further growth.

Embedded in this shift is the suggestion that “development,” which has been the primary focus of Kelowna’s efforts so far, has succeeded in lifting Kelowna out of its raw state, advancing it far enough along the trajectory of linear progress, that it is now sufficiently and *appropriately* populated, built, lived, and sustained to be thought of as embedded within processes of urbanization. In other words, Kelowna has transitioned from the rural, and all that this entails, to a condition that, while not fully urban, is urban enough to generate a distinct, and ever more complicated set of phenomena. At the same time, the narrative of a transition from development to urbanization perpetuates many of the assumptions of civilizationism that are the foundation of Kelowna’s frontier history, most notably the equation of urbanization with a form of social, economic, and even

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<sup>28</sup> The racialized discourse of modern civilization was produced and materialized in colonial settings through institutions of municipal governance and the discipline of urban planning, which arose “in the tracks of colonial practices of racialization and cultural difference” (Robinson 2006: 4) as a response to the dual challenges of imperialism: the socio-economic changes wrought in the cities of imperial powers and the desire to construct new, modern, controlled cities in the colonies (King 1990; Davis 2004).

moral advancement. Development is both one element of the multiple transition narratives that run through the chronological narrative of Kelowna, and the mechanism or practice which is believed to make the other transitions possible. It defines the past and the goal of these narratives: it condenses everything that came before into a set of clear categories that have been improved or surpassed, even as it projects into the future the perceived opposites and advancements of these categories. In Kelowna, as in many other places, it has defined and restricted what is entailed by the term urbanization – the claims about ‘the urban’ that delineate what is relevant to a narrative of becoming like or being made like the urban, what must have been left behind (not just non-urban but pre-urban), and what it must therefore mean for a place to undergo a process of urbanization.

That the dominant transition narratives of Kelowna’s urbanization take, as their origin, the moment after settlement, assumes that the relevant structures are defined according to a model of stages of development that are claimed to be historically accurate and universally applicable, but which have been shown again and again to be a means of supporting civilizational and developmental narratives and the colonizing practices they enable. Former British Columbia NDP Premier Mike Harcourt, speaking in Kelowna for the Grasslands Conservation Council, is paraphrased as suggesting that “we’ve gone from being a nation of rural residents to one of urbanites, which he called *homo urbanis*. ‘It took all of human history to take us from being hunter-gatherers to being city-dwellers’” (KCN 2007: n.p.). Urbanization, he suggests, is the culmination of human history, a comparatively recent achievement that regrettably but necessarily required the conquer and disenfranchisement of the Indigenous peoples who inhabited the land before it was a ‘nation of rural residents’.

There is a sense in which even the critical narratives about Kelowna’s history and current growth highlight the particularly linear model of development that animates it. Paradoxically, suggesting that the urbanization of Kelowna – the diversification of population, the presence of the university – has enabled a small but growing set of narratives to challenge the dominant, universalizing and colonizing visions of the city’s development, only serves to repeat the progressivist, developmental narratives that are said to be challenged. If urbanization has brought Kelowna to a point where the problematic foundations and practices of its origins can be questioned, and perhaps

someday surpassed, then the claims about the positive transitions effected by urbanization continue to support, if unintentionally, claims of progressive unidirectionality.

*From nation-states to urban markets*

These transformations lead to a final transition narrative, one that focuses on the authority to define and instantiate urbanization, to identify its problems and determine its solutions: questions of who makes the crucial decisions that shape what Kelowna becomes, and where and how this authority is exercised. This narrative suggests that there is a fundamental transition underway in the politics of urbanization, from an emphasis on municipal governance, nested within the distributed authority of the province and federal government, to something new, diffused, and still somewhat undefined.

Kelowna's incorporation as a city established its emplacement within relations of sovereign authority: the peculiar model of Canadian incorporation, one that established "the city as a corporation without citizens" (Isin 1992), was developed to turn settler communities into tools of colonial governance, and this municipal structure was institutionalized within the federalized government to ensure that political authority was understood as a delegation from the sovereign (provincial) state. The narrative of the foundation of Kelowna – as a place and as a community of people – places it within a broader narrative of modern politics, which created simultaneously hierarchical and parallel authorities in the state, the citizen-subjects within each state, and the international system of states without. This narrative of modern politics relies on claims of a linear advancement towards shared democracy, freedom, and progress that have simultaneously made possible the excessive violences and inequalities of myriad imperialism, including the colonization of the Syilx people. It envisions municipal governance, embedded within the centralizing structures of sovereignty, as the appropriate authority over urbanization conceived as a process of development, by developing and enforcing policies, bylaws, and Official Community Plans within its jurisdictional restrictions of land use, zoning, and property taxes. It is a vision not just of a desired form of urbanization but of a desired and expected politics: consultative (according to strict limitations) and community-based (according to strict definitions on community) within a system of formally representative

governance. As such, it generates expectations of order that determine who can properly participate, how, when, where, and in what form.

That contemporary urbanization is increasingly identified as a set of global phenomena which have less to do with colonial nation-building projects and more to do with world-wide, even planetary, processes of economic restructuring poses a fundamental challenge to definitions of the politics of urbanization that focus on municipal governance within a system of nation-states. In this context, narratives of Kelowna's foundation as a hinterland within a system of *economic* imperialism – providing natural resources that could be transformed into profit in the metropolitan centres – become the predominant definition of the politics of urbanization: the transformations of global capitalism, and the contemporary emergence of neoliberalism, is the primary cause of the way growth is accommodated, and even instigated, in Kelowna (Aguiar et al. 2005; Aguiar and Martin 2011). The national and global economic restructuring that is captured under the broad characterization of the transition from Fordist to post-Fordist economies is visible in Kelowna's specific transitions (Aguiar et al. 2005; Aguiar and Martin 2011). These include the already-familiar move from primarily land-based ranges, agriculture/orcharding, and some resource extraction, to agritourism and the wine industry, as well as towards service, health, education and technology sectors. But they also include telling shifts in industry and manufacture within, and just outside, the city: the growth industries are in high technology and aerospace, and the remaining long-term manufacturers focus on construction and leisure and holiday industries: local companies including Glenmore Windows and Doors, Burnco concrete, Champion Boats, and Okanagan RVs have remained viable through economic storms. While Kelowna has, in some ways, transitioned from being a complete hinterland (defined by its isolation and resource extraction) to at least a regional metropolis, the regional post-Fordist restructuring also highlights the transition from understanding Kelowna primarily as embedded within provincial and federal contexts of economic policies, economic development, and investment in infrastructure, to being drawn (willingly or not) into globally defined and organized processes of neoliberalization that may be implemented by state governments but that are overwhelmingly considered to be generated in the private sphere of capital.

The narrative of Kelowna as a site of neoliberal restructuring is engaged elsewhere (Aguiar and Martin 2011; Aguiar and Keyes, forthcoming), as are the networks of interactions between municipal government and core individuals and institutions that have significantly shaped the urban form in Kelowna through patterns of development and redevelopment, investments and lack of investments (Marten 2009). Embedded within this world-wide economic system, Kelowna now confronts the apparent imperative to become world-class in order to remain viable as a community. This emphasis on transforming into a world-class city is exemplary of the pressures on smaller cities to compete globally (Bell and Jayne 2006). Kelowna's propagation of the language of creative, competitive cities signals this shift, particularly the comparative and competitive urban relations that are less and less often defined by and bound within the nation state: when the City of Kelowna promotes itself as "a creative city [that] is a competitive city in the global marketplace, and a welcoming, attractive home for a diverse population" (Michaels 2010), it is accepting the terms of a form of restructuring dictated and determined by global economic forces and is transmuting those terms into practices that fall within the jurisdictional limitations of municipal authority and the OCP: land use and zoning, property taxes, and development permits. This narrative therefore represents a doubled transition: not only has the perceived political authority for urbanization shifted, from the nation-state to the urban-driven market, but the necessary analytical focus for engaging with urbanization in scholarly and political terms must necessarily follow this shift. The fear, as expressed by scholars and residents of Kelowna alike, is that this imperative for global competitiveness leads to its own violences and exclusions, from the clearing of undesirable and unproductive bodies from the sites of investment and revitalization, to the willingness to let multitudes live in insecurity while increasing wealth, privilege, and leisure is secured for the few. If the political transition narrative suggests that we are leaving behind the commitments of 'development' as understood as state-driven accumulation and colonial accounts of civilization, the focus on a transition to neoliberal political economies of global urbanization suggest that these commitments are transfigured rather than transcended.

*From boosterism to critique, critique to transcendence*

What becomes visible, in tracing the urbanization of Kelowna as and through these interconnected transition narratives, is the extent to which the process of narrating, envisioning, representing, and producing Kelowna has itself undergone a significant transition, from the forms of “founding-father” boosterism that are so familiar in urban development to forms of critical, even scholarly engagement that have arguably been made possible in part by the institution and growth of UBC Okanagan, in part by the growing diversity of the city, and in part by the growing, and vocal, resurgence of the Syilx community. Further, the narratives told about Kelowna and the narratives listened to within Kelowna have shifted from being overwhelming produced within the dominant perspective, holding forth on the development of Kelowna as a white Eden as both factually correct and normatively desirable, to including a small but growing number of accounts that arise from and attend to multiple perspectives, including professionalized practices of academia and artistic creation, Indigenous scholarly and spiritual resurgences, and everyday social and political practices. The institutions that enable these critical views onto Kelowna have, arguably, been made possible by its urbanization: including the growth of local institutions, the importing of other perspectives into Kelowna, the increasing tensions wrought by development, and the increasing flow between Kelowna and the world.

Thus, even as contemporary urbanization generates the fear that new modes of oppression and disenfranchisement are being instituted, it also offers the hope that new modes of political relations and political practices might emerge, ones that shift emphasis from top-down authorities to bottom-up, community-defined and driven priorities. Speaking in Kelowna, former BC premier Mike Harcourt captured the sentiment that the new urban problems require new urban solutions: “[w]ith [the] move to cities has come urban sprawl and cars and air pollution, [Harcourt] pointed out, and a one-size-fits all answer from the top down, will not work” (KCN 2007: n.p.). By unsettling and decentering traditional modern politics, contemporary urbanization seems to promise to open space for a new kind of urban politics, still diffused and undefined, but inherent to the emergence of a shared global urban condition. Not only are the ongoing transformations of the politics of urbanization *imminent*, the result of the unstoppable

process of urban development, but also *immanent* to the process of urbanization: the transformations of contemporary global urbanization are providing new conditions of possibility, necessity, and impossibility for transformed politics.

### **Uncertain futures/limited futures**

Despite the sense of possibility and necessity embedded within this narrative of urbanization as a fundamental political transition, what kind of city Kelowna will transition into is an open question. The first suggested answer accepts the terms of neoliberal restructuring and the thesis of creative, competitive cities, which has become increasingly common in Kelowna's planning and policy documents. In this vision, Kelowna becomes, for good or ill, a leader in incorporating leisure as a primary source of production, consumption, and even employment, for those who work to sustain the lifestyles of those who have no need of work. From the other side of Canada, someone could thus observe that

[w]hile Kelowna does have some unique attributes in its scenic topography and its mild climate, I wonder whether this city is an indicator of future Canadian urban trends. ...the business of Kelowna is recreational activity and supplying the services to a large cohort of retirees who are consumers but not wage earners. Is this the way of our urban future? (Donnelly 2008: n.p.).

Arguing that the City of Kelowna must use its authority to augment its leisure sector with a more vibrant and diversely productive population, Dr. Michael Goldberg, a “professor, researcher, author and speaker who has conducted extensive global research on cities, transportation, housing and land use systems,” told members of the Okanagan chapter of the Urban Development Institute (UDI) that “[c]ities are now drivers of the global economy...cities need to take a much more active role in their economic future” (Paterson 2012b). So far, so familiar. Yet he continued by arguing that “[o]ne thing that cities have control over is land use. Being innovative, flexible and attentive to the role that land use can play in keeping occupancy costs low and livability high is absolutely essential” (Paterson 2012b). Faced with the complexity of contemporary planetary urbanization under neoliberal structures of capitalism, place-based, territorial definitions of the urban have been losing favour: the city is argued to be delineated through its

myriad networks; or it is argued to be obsolete in favour of non-territorial definitions of the urban; or both city and urban are argued to be insufficient for grasping the complex and multiple practices of urbanization as a process. The mundane territoriality of land as a material and spatial reality that delineates and is administrated by a singular city has been increasingly interpreted as a vestigial feature from a previous era of urbanization, and even as an ideologically-driven obfuscation of current conditions. Yet insofar as the account of urbanization as the creative destruction of space under neoliberal conditions of capital figures the state (and by extension, presumably, the local state) as a political economic space simultaneously restructured by capitalism/urbanization and tasked with administering this restructuring within its jurisdictions, the institutional reality of most cities, which limits policy authority to land use, zoning, and property taxes, requires that a place-based sense of the city or the urban must remain necessary, just not sufficient, for engaging with urbanization. In other words, if the municipal government is to be seen as a tool to achieve the goals of economic restructuring of a global elite, the territorial and jurisdictional political boundaries of a city still matter, though not necessarily in the same ways as they did before.

The second perspective is a more explicit focus on urban sustainability. While no longer the dominant perspective on Kelowna's city council, this narrative is still embedded within the Official Community Plan and a range of other planning priorities that formally guide Kelowna's growth. Sustainable urbanization and neoliberal urbanization do not need to be seen as mutually exclusive, and indeed, most language holds them aligned: that the creative cities route, depending on knowledge and service economies and development of vibrant city centres, can protect land and resources, sustain social and cultural development, as well as ensure economic viability by encouraging productive workers and capital investments to chose Kelowna. However, in its most extreme version, the sustainability narrative seems to place limits on the urban growth and the possible urban future of Kelowna, as in ecologist David Schindler's<sup>29</sup> suggestion that

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<sup>29</sup> Killam Memorial Professor of Ecology at the University of Alberta, speaking at annual conference of the Canadian Society of Ecology and Evolution, hosted by UBCO.

[i]t's time to shut the doors on the Okanagan. "Developers won't like it, but lots of people are fed up with increased density." ... [He] remembers visiting the Okanagan years ago. Since then he has seen the results of more people, more intense agriculture, development of more-grandiose houses and the resulting huge traffic problems. ... Instead, development has to be slowed and people should decide what level of human populations they want, then they need to figure out how to get there and then stabilize populations (Steeves 2013).

While this may appear as an anti-urbanization narrative, it maintains a claim about what kind of city Kelowna should become and can therefore be understood as offering an alternative urbanization narrative. Here, the territorial and jurisdictional political boundaries of Kelowna as a city take on different meanings, assuming in part a central municipal government and local community with both the will and the authority to set determinative limits to Kelowna's urbanization and thus to the future size and form of the community.

Both of the over-arching perspectives on the necessary future of urbanization in Kelowna contribute to the ongoing narrative of Kelowna as a paradise built, a paradise lost (Bennett 1998; MacHardy 2005/2006), and a paradise that must be regained. The characteristic boosterism of Kelowna, never far from the centre of the dominant transition narratives, is mixed with the sense that in the process of becoming a fully-fledged city, something significant is being lost (Cooper 2013). The possibility of reclaiming or reconfiguring Kelowna as an Oasis is made to depend on identifying, planning, and materializing the right form of urbanization, whether that is the creative city, the sustainable city, or some other form of urban community. The contradictory perspectives on Kelowna appear to resolve into a synthetic vision of Kelowna as the almost, but not quite, urban. And it is this vision of the future-orientation and future achievement of Kelowna's urban status, more than any specific urban characteristic or any specific transition narrative, that emplaces Kelowna within a distinct narrative of urbanization as a process of becoming like and being made like the urban, a process that continually supplants its product and produces itself as not-yet-fully urban. Kelowna becomes the urban of the future, which, as the not-yet-now, entails an openness of meanings. It can simply mean that, given its emplacement in the linear transition narrative of urbanization, Kelowna will soon be properly, fully urban. It can mean, if the strictest sense of

sustainable development is applied, the necessary redefinition of the urban and its boundaries: limited, controlled, sustained against external and internal threats to the well-being of a defined human and non-human community.

## **Dislocating the boundaries of urbanization in Kelowna**

### **Nothing is clear**

The focus in Kelowna has been on development, rather than on urbanization, an elision or substitution made possible by what seems to be the uncontroversially clear narrative of urbanization as a process of passing through predictable stages of development. The path is well known, and Kelowna is on it, as are many other places, strung out on this continuum of global urbanization. It can be easily compressed into a singular statement, and often is:

The Okanagan Valley is in transition. However, while the land is geographically fixed, our ideas about, connections to, and visions of this place are dynamic. In little more than a hundred years, we have moved from centuries of First Nations settlement through an agricultural regime of ranches, farms, and orchards and into a ‘post-subsistence’ era glossed by images of wine country and agri-tourism (Hessing 2010/2011: 133).

And yet, as often as this statement is made, it is also unmade, and the simplicity of the linear transition narrative complicated. Concerns about urbanization and questions of what sort of city Kelowna is now, and should become, preoccupy municipal planning and public debate, and the lack of consistency in the meaning, identification, and desirability of urbanization opens gaps in the apparently straight-forward trajectory.

### **To be(come) or not to be(come) urban**

The prevalence of dominant transition narratives about Kelowna stands at odds with the ongoing debates over how Kelowna should urbanize, whether it is a city or not, whether urbanization is desirable or not, and even whether urbanization is necessary or not. The dominant argument that comes out of the narrative of Kelowna’s transition is that Kelowna is urbanizing, according to traditional definitions of population density,

diversity, built form, and other positivist markers of ‘the urban.’ The dominant counter-argument is that Kelowna is not urbanizing, at least, not really, not properly, because its growth does not easily mirror other long-established images of the urban: an architecturally dominant downtown core with a concentration of economic, cultural, and political institutions, dynamic neighbourhoods, and proximate diversity. Due to the specific chronology of Kelowna’s incorporation and later annexation of neighbouring communities, and its specific history as a settlement community grounded in agricultural production, it retains geographic features that make it particularly difficult to reconcile Kelowna with existing images of the ‘urban,’ yet which also do not easily reconcile with existing definitions of the ‘rural:’

The curious feature of Kelowna is that it has agricultural lands within the city limits. There are vast tracts of orchards and vineyards on fertile flatlands protected by laws from urbanization or subdivision. These employ only a small portion of the population in either seasonal farming efforts or food processing. ...I visited a tiny goat cheese manufactory complete with its own herd of goats within the city boundary (Donnelly 2008: n.p.).

Instead, Kelowna often becomes an example of a form of suburbanization, the sprawl of highways, commercial developments, and residential communities, so often gated, that raise specters of homogeneity and individuation, exclusivity and isolation, and even banality. These and other factors contribute to the argument that Kelowna is not, in fact, an example of traditional urbanization at all, but better understood by such terms as exurban, or fringe city, or decentred/denucleated city. These claims appear to be contradictory, even mutually exclusive, yet they also highlight the extent to which the definitions and identifying features of the urban, the suburban, and the rural are under debate. As all of these ways of defining Kelowna continue to rely in one way or another on categories that are debated, and increasingly debatable, they do not necessarily provide greater clarity.

Regardless of whether Kelowna is now, or ever truly was, an isolated rural community, there is sufficient self-identification with the notion of small-town Kelowna – even the popular moniker “K-Town” suggests this nostalgia – that urbanization is not seen as a universal good. While some residents valorize the perceived transition from a rural redneck society, dominated by cars and bush parties, to a civilized urban culture

(Wood 2007), other residents are convinced that urbanization brings with it a savage criminality unknown in rural communities (Zeger 2011). Urbanization may bear promises of world-class status and sustainable futures, but it also promises a form of irreplaceable or irredeemable loss, at least for some. The transitions of urbanization are seen as altering forever elements of Kelowna's identity: its unique bioclimatic ecosystem with its now endangered species of plants and animals; and the lake itself, the dominant geographic feature and the core of the imaginary of Kelowna as Oasis. As one resident laments, "[t]he lake is the defining feature of our city, yet it is becoming ever less accessible to those of us not fortunate enough to live on the water" (Janmaat 2011). If urbanization is the unstated obvious of Kelowna's transition narratives, remarkably under the surface and out of debate, it is also at the heart of a range of contentions about the economic, social, material, and cultural transformations in Kelowna.

### **The uncertainty of boundaries**

The boundaries that enable the traditional transition narrative of urbanization – rural/urban, nature/culture, tradition/modern, homogeneity/heterogeneity, state/market – have been increasingly dismissed as sources of analytical diversion and confusion: scholarly arguments suggest that they have been dialectically surpassed and made obsolete by global economic restructuring, or that they mark non-existent divisions within networks of connection and mutual constitution. While these categories of traditional transition narratives may no longer provide analytical insight into the collected phenomena that comprise the processes and effects of urbanization, they remain a primary means through which residents in and observers of Kelowna debate urbanization as a problematic of contemporary communal life. In an era when urbanization is supposed to be transforming modern politics to such an extent as to render uncertain how the categories of politics can be applied to urbanization, the way in which the categories of traditional transition narratives are used to engage and debate urbanization draws attention to the mutable and contestable boundaries that enable these categories. It is this mutability and contestability, perhaps, that has led scholars of urbanization to consider these categories as untenable analytical foundations. Yet the ongoing repetition of these categories makes it difficult to turn away. It is time to look again at the continued

delineation of the many boundaries of urbanization. Certainly, this refocusing is repetitive, intentionally re-engaging previous examples rather than introducing new material. This time round, the emphasis shifts, if almost imperceptibly, to the way transition narratives of urbanization mark and mobilize these categories as indeterminate and unstable.

*Rural/urban:*

As already noted, the boundary between conceptual categories of rural and urban is frequently, if variably, invoked in Kelowna, just as the category of suburban is used to reconcile the often-irreconcilable differences between perceptions of what rural and urban must entail. Similarly, geographic boundaries between rural and urban are less clear than the definitions of each category would suggest. Urbanization is identified as having brought a set of challenges and conflicts between residential neighbourhoods and agricultural lands, particularly as the residential developments get denser, higher, and thus more ‘urban’ in their character and experience. Decades ago, observers were already noting about perceived rural/urban relations that “[t]he tension between the two groups is mounting as the subdivisions of rapidly growing cities like Kelowna make contact with orchard lands” (CP 1994: n.p.). Yet it has also already been noted that orchards have long been a feature of the city, and the city has long emplaced itself within the orchards, particularly through early developments such as Capri Centre (1959) and Orchard Park Shopping Centre (1971). These tensions are far from new, and far from simple. The consistency of these tensions over time, even as their particular sites and contexts shift, highlights how the designations of rural and urban have had to shift continually over time: not surprisingly, the Capri Centre, once the marker of the spread of urban construction into isolated rural land, is now the focus of a multi-decade, multi-phased redevelopment on the basis that it under-utilizes prime land in one of the city’s OCP-designated urban development centres.<sup>30</sup> While such processes of development and redevelopment are consistent with urbanization thought in terms of capitalist creative destruction, they also suggest that the designations of rural and urban develop and gain relative meaning through the myriad processes of urbanization, rather than existing as the

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<sup>30</sup> At a recent city-sponsored public information and input session at Capri Centre, the primary concern mentioned by the public was sufficient parking, which reinforces the view of Kelowna as an urban suburb.

fixed states, opposed poles, or clear geographic boundaries that are used to define urbanization as a transition narrative.

*Nature/culture:*

Kelowna's bid to become world-class in its chosen attributes – particularly leisure-oriented recreational lifestyles that promise equal access to urban amenities, agricultural idylls, and wilderness adventures – has brought it international attention. The world is promised that “Canada's Okanagan region has the potential to spellbind with its mix of nature and development” (Wynn 2010/2011). But this mix of nature and development is seen as unstable, threatened even, as a result of urbanization and the various interventions urbanization brings:

The natural environment and biological diversity (biodiversity) is well known to convey widespread social, cultural and intrinsic values known as ecological goods and services for residents and visitors. That same biodiversity and ecological landscape which provides for our basic needs is *under imminent threat from various human forces including but not limited to rapid urbanization, agricultural expansion, and wildfire mitigation*” (Kelowna 2011b: 6.1; emphasis added)

Urbanization may be threatening what is ‘natural’ about Kelowna, but at the same time, it is not leading to the forms of ‘urban culture’ that the transition narratives would suggest are imminent, and immanent, within processes of urbanization. Indeed, Kelowna is marked by a preoccupation with a perceived lack of culture and is continually confronted by the challenges of creating or sustaining forms that are commonly recognized as urban culture. Even the Cultural District has had problems generating or supporting cultural practices, and “...the city once deemed the Cultural Capital of Canada [has] suffered through unsuccessful locally produced festivals and business failures in the district dedicated to artistic pursuits” (Michaels 2010: n.p.). Urbanization is not leading to an identifiable urban culture, but the expectation that urbanization necessarily transforms the culture of a community has generated a range of questions and debates about what a specifically urban culture would look like, how it would develop, how it would be different from rural culture, and who makes it happen. Does local government, for instance, “have a role in building a vibrant culture? If so, what does it look like?” (Michaels 2010: n.p.). Further, the same complex interactions between municipal policy,

public institutions, and private enterprise that are considered crucial to fostering the development of urban culture are operative in defining and redefining ‘nature’ for an urban audience, as Fern Helfland’s (2010/2011) photo essay about residential development and marketing in Kelowna makes clear:

Responding to the environment around her and training her camera lens upon the suburban residential developments that are springing up across the Okanagan Valley (and in many rapidly urbanizing areas of the developed world), [Helfland] captures the fabricated nature of the setting inhabited by many people in contemporary Western societies. ...marketed for their views ... and their locations on the edge of ‘Nature’ ...” (Wynn 2010/2011: 5)

So powerful is the imaginary of Kelowna as a natural idyll that can, that *must* withstand the changes of urbanization, that even cultural interventions and feats of human production and engineering become absorbed within the category of nature, particularly nature as picturesque. The inclusion of orchards and vineyards within lists of Kelowna’s natural wonders is one example. The introduction of the floating WAC Bennett Bridge in 1958 is another: the 2005 centenary exhibit at the Kelowna Art Gallery suggests that “painters just expand[ed] the picturesque to include and naturalize [the bridge] – paradise is elastic, they imply” (MacHardy 2005/2006: 95). What becomes clear, again, is that the boundaries between nature and culture are far from clear, defined, determined or predetermined, and that the supposed mechanisms from transitioning from one to the other rarely take the path that is assumed, even as their application to the transitions of urbanization is made continually necessary in a way that suggests over-determination.

*Whiteness/diversity:*

In the dominant narratives of urbanization, transitions from rural to urban and from nature to culture are paralleled by perceived transitions from simplicity, homogeneity, and often, rural whiteness, to complexity, heterogeneity, and urban ‘proximate diversity’ (Jacobs 1992; Magnusson 2011a). Kelowna’s narrative both confirms and subverts this transition narrative: the self-imaginaries of an idyllic white community are powerful influences in the ongoing, disproportionate whiteness of Kelowna, while at the same time, these imaginaries have continually blinded Kelowna to the diversity in its midst, both historically, and even more so in its contemporary period

of rapid growth. While Kelowna markets its particular brand of lifestyle-driven amenity migration through the codes of acceptable “whiteness” (Aguiar et al. 2005), its transformation into a regional urban centre has also brought a diversity of other migrants who do not easily find a place within the self-styled white community. Thus,

[w]hen [UBC-Okanagan] urban geographer Carlos Teixeira sees forested hills [in Kelowna] being turned into paved plateaus where large and fancy dwellings stand row on row, he is less impressed by patterns of economic and urban expansion than moved to worry about the housing experiences, stresses, and coping strategies of the new immigrants who cannot afford to occupy such accommodation (Wynn 2010/2011: 6).

As other critical scholars have noted about Kelowna, even if contemporary global processes of urbanization are leading to greater social and cultural diversity, this transformation does not easily follow the cosmopolitan assumptions about urban diversity that so frequently underlie the dominant transition narratives of urbanization. The colonial settlement of Kelowna and its transformation into a particularly narrow vision of an upper-class British Imperial outpost have profound contemporary repercussions, including the significant “... tensions generated when neoliberal economic strategies embrace the recruitment of foreign ‘guest workers’ but fail to acknowledge that those who arrive may be defined by some according to socio-cultural repertoires ‘culled from a collective memory of racisms’” (Wynn 2010/2011: 7). Just as the Okanagan Syilx people were bound to reserve lands that restricted their traditional cultures, and yet legally, spatially, economically, and conceptually restricted from participating in the new modes of life being developed at Kelowna’s early colonial settlement, Jamaican temporary labourers were brought to Kelowna and then met with myriad forms of restriction and rejection. Media coverage of this period “reveals... a systematic ‘othering’ and stereotyping of the other (especially the Jamaican male) by white institutions in a white place” (Aguiar et al. 2010/2011: 66). Boundaries between whiteness and other have been shown to be “elastic” (Satzewich 2007: 71), up to a point, but specific boundaries between white and Indigenous, and white and black, have been particularly intransigent in Kelowna. These debates about whiteness and diversity tend to simultaneously and paradoxically encode urban and anti-urban biases (Barracough 2011): on the one hand, that urbanization will necessarily bring diversity, and thus cosmopolitan community; and

on the other, that growth must be directed and shaped (not necessarily stopped or limited) to ensure that only the proper new migrants will chose Kelowna. The practices of defining and protecting whiteness in Kelowna, against a seemingly endless series of threats, suggest that these boundaries are experienced as both impassable and incredibly vulnerable (Tedesco, forthcoming).

*Local/global and state/market*

The dominant linear transition narrative of urbanization holds that while forms of social, economic, and political organization change, and even change our relationships to the landscape, “the land [itself] is geographically fixed” (Hessing 2010/2011: 133). This modern Euclidean geography established a relationship between space and place where the local was embedded within the state, which was itself embedded within the international system of states, in a structure that was simultaneously hierarchically nested and functionally parallel. This structure put both people and places *in place*, locatable with singular clarity; at least, that was the ideal. However, the transitions of contemporary global urbanization have been so profound as to create the uncertainty regarding the relationship between local and global as an uncertainty in this foundational relationship between space and place. In other words, urbanization has brought a transition not just from one place within the hierarchical scale of equivalencies to another, but a transition in the political geography of space and place. The transition narrative of global urbanization now holds that the local is necessarily, simultaneously global, and that the structuring force, the foundation of the spatial and conceptual map, is not the state and the system of states, but the market and its structuring and restructuring of networks of urban-centred economic processes that produce, differentiate, and transform both urban and rural conditions. In this context, the now-trite claim that “to act locally [for Okanagan sustainability], we need to think globally” (Hessing 2010/2011: 132) stakes a significant claim about the shifting boundaries between local and global, states and markets. Contemporary urbanization now entails an embeddedness in and reliance on a shared global urban world, and so “[w]hile focusing on the local requirements of this region, we need to remember that Okanagan futures are contingent upon those of others” (Hessing 2010/2011: 132). What comprises Kelowna as a locale or place, where Kelowna resides on its path towards possible futures, and what determines

how it fits within emerging global structures – how Kelowna looks out to the world, and how the world is welcomed in to Kelowna – are the focus of intense debate, as are questions of what authority takes precedence in determining the nature and composition of this place. Debates around Kelowna Mountain Resort are exemplary of attempts to stake these boundaries of local and global, with Regional District officials maintaining their authority to control the zoning, development, and investment patterns in the venture, and land owner and developer maintaining that international economic interest and competitive positioning within global networks of tourism and investment confer the necessary authority for him to develop without Regional District approval (Smith 2012a: n.p.). This debate is made possible in part because the development is located just outside the legal boundary of the City of Kelowna: it can pitch itself as a development that will bring jobs and financing to the local community, while not being beholden to local planning processes.

### **Relational boundaries**

From the shifted perspective followed here, at least through this moment, the categories of rural/urban, nature/culture, local/global, homogenous/heterogeneous, state/market, traditional/modern, and past/present//present/future are not significant as real or actual demarcations of conditions that can be confirmed or denied according to positivist or empirical epistemological standards. Nor are they simply analytical obfuscations, in the sense that their use directs attention away from what *really matters* about urbanization in Kelowna, or anywhere else. Instead, they are significant as categories through which competing visions of the urbanization of Kelowna are articulated and debated. The categories are not given, predetermined, distinct, but somehow *relational*: they define each other, constitute the conceptual parameters of each other, and work together to delineate their possible and impossible application to phenomena. Further, it is possible to see, in the vignettes above, the ways in which urbanization can be said to produce the categories that it is supposed to exceed, surpass, or reconcile, and thus produce the boundaries that delineate these categories. Approached relationally, urbanization generatively produces ‘the urban’ and ‘the rural’ (and their amplifying and attenuating cognates) as co-constitutive concepts,

categories, and imaginaries. The play of past and future within this process gives urbanization the appearance of a linear transition, but the relational interpretation suggests that this transformative dynamic is far more complicated, both conceptually and spatiotemporally. Urbanization is not a chronological process but a relational one, a process that constitutes the rural and the urban, and its cognate terms, terms that do not and arguably cannot exist outside of a process of urbanization (FitzSimmons 1989: 110). On a relational reading of urbanization, there is not a singular boundary between rural and urban that can hold, as separate, phenomena that were once firmly believed to be separate, but productions of and boundaries between rural and urban and their cognates that have shifted over time as a result of changes in the processes of urbanization itself. Rather than taking for granted a predetermined ‘rural’ as the past and a predetermined ‘urban’ as the future of urbanization as a chronological progressive advancement, this reading emphasizes urbanization as a process of transformation that produces and reproduces the shifting category of “urbanization.”

Urbanization generates the differential material forms, social structures, and spatiotemporal boundaries that at any given time have their differences designated as rural and urban (and their cognates), and also generates the differential conceptual frameworks and theoretical boundaries that make it possible to identify, mobilize, and experience the rural and the urban as differential, even independent, conditions. The positivist faith in a stable geographic boundary between rural and urban may have lost its explanatory power for most analysts of contemporary global urbanization, but some form of relational co-constitution of and boundary between rural and urban, and the various cognates stated and unstated, remains operative, working to enable certain arguments and visions and foreclose others. They use the terms of traditional transition narratives of urbanization, while simultaneously subverting the conceptual and spatiotemporal reliance on transition narratives.

Whatever it might mean to become urban, the traditional transition narratives of urbanization – rural to urban, nature to culture, traditional to modern, homogenous to heterogeneous – and even the political transition narrative of state to market, appear less and less able to account for the uncertainties of contemporary global urbanization, particularly as their orientations and disorientations, amplifications and attenuations are

narrated together. Urbanization may be a process of becoming like or being made like the urban, but as the urban itself has increasingly become defined not just as a site but a process of ongoing complexity and heterogeneity, the transitions of urbanization have similarly become recognized as more disparate and multiple than simply land use, population, and demographics. Yet even as they appear to lose their analytic purchase in the face of the complexities of global urbanization, transition narratives continue to provide structure to accounts of urbanization. Now, however, the transition narratives argue for understanding global urbanization as a fundamental transformation in our ability to locate urbanization, to say what urbanization is, to our definitions and analytical categories, and to our experiences of and encounters with the urban, and with each other within urban spaces and times.

### **Transition metanarratives of urbanization**

The scale and speed of contemporary urbanization – not just global but planetary; not just quickening but exploding in an exponential curve – have ostensibly made any place-based transition from rural to urban inconsequential; what matters is the global pattern of inclusions and exclusions, the centripetal and centrifugal forces of development and accumulation (Brenner 2013). The urban is not so much a place as a fixation, a temporary agglomeration that is necessarily different tomorrow. This generates attempts to understand urbanization as a process that produces a place as both here and not-here: as a place-beyond-place (Massey 2006) defined through its embeddedness in multiple spatial webs and scales, or through the distantiated (Amin and Thrift 2002) linkages that produce the appearance of a singular, territorial place. These dislocations and distantiations must be thought in temporal terms as much as spatial, disrupting narratives of linear progressions from tradition to modernity, from past to present. However, what remains is the narrative of transition: that urbanization has wrought a fundamental, material and conceptual transformation of contemporary space and time, in material, conceptual, and experiential terms. In other words, the processes of contemporary global urbanization require the transformation of notions of what *process* is, no longer tied to singular Cartesian spaces and universal chronological times, but something both ongoing and uncertain. Accounting for the urbanization of Kelowna – the process of this place

becoming like or being made like the urban over time – becomes substantially complicated in light of this narrative of a transition in the *spatiotemporality* of urbanization.

Ultimately, these transition narratives form a complicated, multi-layered arc of transformation, such that what Kelowna *is* is changing, along with the conditions – spatiotemporal, social, institutional, economic, and so on – that make some versions of Kelowna seem possible, some versions seem absolutely necessary, and others seem increasingly, threateningly, impossible. These changes suggest that ‘urbanization’ itself is changing, and that these changes are made manifest in Kelowna. But they also suggest a more troubling possibility, that the *ontology* of urbanization is made fully uncertain by urbanization itself. In this context, if the earlier boundaries that delineated the process of urbanization – transitions across the boundary between rural and urban and its myriad cognates – are apparently no longer relevant, the suggestion that all-new categories are needed does not speak merely to the need for analytical clarity and renewed conceptual boundaries, but to a need to generate or reveal renewed ontological certainty. Efforts to chart the transition in necessary *epistemologies* of urbanization are therefore, implicitly or explicitly, working in relation to perceived transitions in the ontologies of urbanization. However, while the categories of these transitions narratives may seem increasingly slippery, even irrelevant or inapplicable, for understanding the *phenomena* of urbanization on a global scale, the dominant account of the urbanization of Kelowna suggests that they continue to be used as the basis of narratives about *what urbanization means and can mean*, at least to people who experience themselves within a process of urbanization, which raises the question of how one can *experience* contemporary global urbanization, when the categories necessary for delineating what counts as the spatiotemporality, ontology, and epistemology of urbanization, and what does not, are under such profound debate. In a dual sense, then, the *phenomenologies* of urbanization are also undergoing fundamental transitions and opening fundamental uncertainties.

While it is crucial to take seriously the analytical perspectives on urbanization that prompt these overarching narratives of transitions in the spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization – these transition *metanarratives* of urbanization – it is not clear that they bring the desired clarity to the project of locating

a politics of contemporary global urbanization. The transition narratives of urbanization transmute the tension between an actual “city of hope” and “city of fear” (Bauman 2003) into hopes and fears about the increasing dislocation of ‘the urban.’ The category of ‘the urban’ becomes both desired and hated, a condition full of promise and possibility, but also a condition full of threats and insecurities. It is over-determined by all the transition narratives but ultimately, because it exists in the future and is contrasted against the past, it is undefined and indefinable. In other words, the limits of the accounts of urbanization in Kelowna are encountered not just in the unstable, undecidable boundaries of the standard transition narratives, but also in the four problematiques – spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology – that structure transition metanarratives of urbanization. At the same time, the limits of analytical accounts of global urbanization become apparent in the deeply contextualized encounter with what is labeled, with much debate and uncertainty, ‘urbanization’ in Kelowna: here, urbanization as a variable collection of phenomena continually displays uncertain spatiotemporal dynamics, incompatible affective commitments, and undecidable political visions.

The complex ways that debates over how and where to identify the relevant features and experiences of urbanization in Kelowna continually manage to elide any discussion of *urbanization* itself suggests the magnitude of uncertainty at play. It is not at all clear which phenomena are relevant to a narrative of urbanization, precisely because of the transformations it imposes: its spaces and times seem uncontained and uncontainable; its forms are shifting and unconstrained; the terms of discussion and debate are undefined; and it is differentially encountered and experienced. In Kelowna, there is a void in the place where explicit consideration of urbanization, and specific debates about *urbanization* rather than *development*, would reasonably be expected. The urban becomes possible, and necessary, but impossible, and thus urbanization, the process of becoming like or being made like the urban, also becomes possible, necessary, and impossible, an unaccountable paradox that must surely raise questions of any claim to be able to give an account of the politics of urbanization.

### **Politicizing urbanization/urbanizing politics**

Accounts of contemporary urbanization as transitions in social, economic, and material conditions, or even as metanarratives of transitions in the spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization, make a secondary set of claims about *political* transitions. If the concern is not just understanding urbanization in Kelowna as a set of phenomena, but engaging with claims made – in and through debates over global urbanization – about the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities for politics in and beyond Kelowna, then it is necessary to distinguish clearly two forms of claims that are made, sometimes explicitly but more often implicitly, through these articulations of political transition narratives. The first form of claim seeks to *politicize urbanization*: to understand it as a mode of political activity and change, rather than simply as social, geographic, and economic phenomena. The second form of claim seeks to *urbanize politics*: to recognize that the urban and urbanization have had limited presence within analyses of modern politics and to transform political analyses to account for urbanization.<sup>31</sup> Often, these claims work in unison, arguing that the transition from modern urbanization to global urbanization is a fully political process, while simultaneously maintaining that this transition is transforming political practices and political possibilities, often beyond all recognition or existing analyses. Further, through their attempts to politicize urbanization and to urbanize politics, these projects must be understood as seeking to effect or influence these political transitions, rather than merely describe them.

When understood as a relational process of becoming like or being made like the urban (which, due to its assumed linear chronology, also constructs a narrative of becoming less like, or being made less like, the rural) urbanization delineates the boundaries between its constitutive terms, which are in turn labeled, somewhat circularly, as the collective phenomena of urbanization. This dynamic suggests that whatever political transformations are underway through contemporary global urbanization are also more conceptually and spatiotemporally complicated than a linear transition narrative would allow. However, embedded within the notions of ‘becoming like’ and ‘being made like’ are also competing claims about the source, nature, performance, and effects of

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<sup>31</sup> Not all political thought relegates or excludes the urban, but the dominant claims about modern politics do (Magnusson 2011).

political authority that are rarely made explicit. By understanding the relational co-productions of the boundaries and categories of urbanization as processes of “becoming like” and “being made like,” it becomes possible to reconfigure these processes not as derivatives of capitalism, and not as abstractions, but as practices of governing and self-governing that guide, shape, establish, and contest the relational boundaries that produce and are produced by urbanization.

At issue is the way that becoming like the urban and being made like the urban denote, if obliquely, assumptions of two distinct modes of governance, the first an immanent, self-directed process of becoming, and the other an externally-imposed, top-down, even transcendent requirement to be made into the necessary form. The political transition narratives of urbanization are figured as a transition from the formal political realm – by which is meant the dominant model of modern sovereign politics, its institutions and actors – to other forms of communal organization that are new, emergent, and somehow challenging or reconfiguring state sovereignty. The optimistic narrative is that urbanization marks a transition from the top-down, authoritative modes of sovereign politics to a bottom-up, community-driven politics. In the formal terms of political science, this is a transition from a politics of external, even transcendent or transcendental authority, to a politics of immanence whereby authority is generated from within the community. The pessimistic narrative is that urbanization marks a transition from the established forms of modern democracy, freedom, and (at least formal) equality, where each citizen is simultaneously author of and bound to the rules of the state, to some new, diffused, and largely unaccountable form of political authority which renders political subjectivity and political community uncertain. Again, in formal terms, this is the presumption that the politics immanent within the state and the international system of states are being superceded by an externalized, inaccessible, and fundamentally undemocratic authority. It is possible to trace how these contradictory assumptions about governance, and thus about political authority, animate multiple accounts in Kelowna of how and where to locate the politics of urbanization: regardless of whether one looks to formal municipal and regional governance, to political economic structures and more specifically neoliberal restructuring, to grassroots social movements and political organizing, and to forms of disparate, everyday political productions, assemblages,

contestations, this account of politics as a tension between immanent and transcendent authorities remains remarkably consistent, framed in urbanization debates as the tension between ‘becoming like’ or ‘being made like’ the urban.

When the standard development history of Kelowna is held in focus, the politics of urbanization in this place are identified with the formal practices of municipal governance, where authority is delegated, in the Canadian context at least, from the provincial government particularly. This authority is centralized and performed through planning, policy, and bylaw vehicles, such as within the Official Community Plan. Kelowna’s OCP suggests, through its claims to public consultation, that it offers a mechanism through which Kelowna can become like the urban, defining and instantiating a vision of an urban future that is generated within and progressively materialized by the community. This suggestion of self-authorizing urbanization must be tempered with the many modes and expressions of centralized and delegated authority that it contains. In literal terms, the municipal authority to direct urbanization through the OCP covers limited jurisdictions and is delegated from provincial legislature, invoking the Crown and the sovereign state. In broader terms, despite the length of time devoted to public consultation, only a small proportion of residents participated in the range of community input avenues during the OCP planning process, and the mechanisms chosen for community involvement were, arguably, unnecessarily limited.<sup>32</sup> The planning processes were also highly professionalized, with consultants guiding input practices, and with strategies and policies modeled on other urban centres. In such disparate ways, claims that the OCP represents a community vision or was derived from community-driven processes and priorities are over-stated, and beg the question of the processes by which particular communities are enabled to be generalized as universal. There is also the sense, however, that factors that drive growth and development, and the diverse impacts beyond land use, are out of scope, not just because they are too complex, or because they are externally-driven, but necessarily, because of the limits of municipal jurisdictions that are embedded in the delegated authority. In all these senses, the OCP must also be

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<sup>32</sup> Kelowna relied on open house drop-in sessions to elicit feedback at various stages of planning, and online surveys to generate further input. Response numbers to surveys were low, and no attempts were made to develop representative sample groups. Personal observation of open house sessions suggested that a limited demographic of residents participated. In comparison, in Vernon, just north of Kelowna, OCP planning and input practices included presentations to schools and other targeted outreach activities.

understood as a mode of being made like the urban: a vision, limited in both source and scope, turned into law and imbued with authority, the result of social, economic, cultural forces of change which are themselves outside the scope of this law.

When other elements are brought into focus, urbanization in Kelowna appears channeled through and driven by neoliberalism, and Kelowna appears caught up in a process of being made like 'the urban' as a particular neoliberal form of urban economy and sociospatial community. These accounts effect a different mode of urbanizing politics and politicizing urbanization, shifting the presumed spacetime, form, categories, and practices of politics from the state to the market, while at the same time transforming the spacetime, form, categories, and practices of the urban from the territorially defined site of urban governance to geographically unbound patterns of urban employment, investment, and consumption: urban production in the broadest sense of the word. The authority of this mechanism is located in the hegemony of capitalist global forces, and it is instantiated and operationalized at the local level, in Kelowna as elsewhere, by elite figures within municipal government and without who can be demonstrated as powering Kelowna's growth machine (Marten 2009). The irony of neoliberal restructuring as a mechanism that imposes a process of being made like the urban is that success is thought to derive, in part at least, from the ability to identify and magnify the picture of unique place and to foster self-generated, entrepreneurial practices, particularly if these developments seem to be able to arise spontaneously, outside the encompassing remit of the OCP; it is this apparently spontaneous expression of place that acts as a crucial marker of a truly creative city, a truly alive city. Yet even if some elements of development, change, and growth within the neoliberal city are ostensibly self-generated, these are not sufficient to sustain a claim to the immanent politics of a community-driven process of urbanization. More often, it is the resistance that major urban development and redevelopment projects engender that are cited as offering instances of community-based and community-driven forms of urban transformation against the hegemonic powers of global urban restructuring. However, in debates over development in Kelowna, opposition to large scale developments, particularly increases in height and density, are as likely to come from a category of amenity migrant for whom the small-town form of Kelowna was an essential element of its unique place-based appeal as from residents

concerned with inclusivity, social justice, and affordability. From this perspective, even Kelowna's OCP can be read as a tool of economic restructuring (Martin 2009).

When focus shifts again, to more disruptive narratives at the margins of standard accounts of urbanization, what becomes visible are the ways that the transformations of Kelowna have been enabled by diffuse, informal, and everyday practices that assemble it into an urban site. Large-scale institutional and structural patterns of political and urban organization fade, and a range of unpredictable, material, often hidden patterns of urbanism emerge, challenging the grid of intelligibility constituted by the structural accounts. Through this lens, relevant political actors in the urbanization of Kelowna are located not with the City government, nor with the economic elite or depersonalized economic forces, but in specific locations and through specific practices. They are in the last remaining trailer parks in the city, threatened by rising land prices, changing perceptions of appropriate and desirable urban forms, and largely unresponsive urban planning processes, yet maintaining their own distinctive built and social forms of organizing urban communal life. They are participants in Kelowna's temporary migrant communities, with their shifting settlements in parks, orchards, and unmapped residential spaces; and the permanent migrant communities, particularly the visible minority communities, accessing settlement services through the aboriginal Friendship centre and challenging, through their embodied presence in the city, Kelowna's self-imaginary as a homogenous white oasis. They are developers outside the territorially-defined space of the city, such as the Kelowna Mountain Resort, who, by bringing to surface the conflicts between formally political and formally economic modes of urban organization, also bring to surface the unplanned and unplannable trajectories of urban growth, and thus the ways in which these forces, each presumed to over-determine the urban, at times collide, shifting or shattering, and leaving voids of under-determination in which the unexpected might emerge. These accounts of urbanization emphasize processes of becoming like the urban, of emergent co-productions, concatenations, and connections. Yet even the unplanned, informal, or day-to-day practices of building Kelowna operate through, or in relation to, processes of being made like the urban, whether in terms of institutional and structural constraints on practices, or in terms of the constraints of external visions of what the necessary urban must be, and thus the imposition of limits, or attempted limits,

on emergent urbanisms. While there is a sense that Kelowna is still small enough to fit through the gaps in the structures of modern politics or the webs of global networked urbanism, these can still be understood as forming spatial perimeters and conceptual parameters that delineate the possibilities and necessities of urban political community, the structures that create the gaps in which something otherwise might emerge.

Here, then, are three distinct accounts of both how urbanization might be politicized, and how politics might be urbanized, by expanding the relational account of boundary production to focus on the boundary between becoming like and being made like the urban. These accounts are commonly narrated not just as distinct but as chronological, as a narrative of transitions in the spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of urbanization and of politics. However, approaching these accounts of urbanization through the lens of becoming like and being made like the urban demonstrates how claims about political transitions obscure the contradictory modes of governance assumed – top-down, transcendent authority versus immanent, self-directed governance – while simultaneously obscuring the extent to which the possibilities of political authority are restricted to the same two forms within what are presented as divergent accounts of politics. Despite narratives of the political transformations of urbanization, these claims and debates about becoming like and being made like the urban continue to mobilize assumptions of political authority that are bound within and replay the conditions of modern politics.

The contextualized engagement with the uncertain boundaries of urbanization in Kelowna therefore poses a significant political challenge to the narratives of political transition that accompany contemporary global urbanization: if urbanization is best understood not as an empirical or chronological transition narrative but as dynamic processes of relational co-constitution, then in what way, through what practices, and with what claims to authority are some relationalities produced and transformations effected as the interconnected phenomena of urbanization, while other possibilities do not emerge or are not captured by the name of urbanization? If urbanization is indeed being transformed, and transforming politics, then on what grounds and through what authority is any potential site, field, or definition of politics to be chosen over another? Thus complicated, the project of politicizing urbanization and urbanizing politics by attending

to the tensions between becoming like and being made like the urban – the tensions between immanent and transcendent models of political authority – becomes exposed to so many questions as to become almost intangible, inaccessible... impossible.

### **Dislocating the problematic boundaries of politics**

The focus of analysis has shifted periodically, from dominant narratives of how the boundaries of urbanization ensure and define Kelowna's urban transitions, to the ways these boundaries are engaged in and through their uncertainties and inconsistencies. Through these analytical shifts, the parameters of visibility also keep shifting, from a simple narrative of urbanization as transition, to a relational narrative of politicizing urbanization and urbanizing politics. The boundaries of contemporary urbanization are used not simply as spatial, chronological, and conceptual determinations on a continuum, but neither are they used consistently as dialectical poles to be (or that have been) surpassed or as sites of proliferating networks of connection and constitution. Instead, what emerges is a narrative of complexity, dynamic change, competing pressures, and fundamental uncertainties. The boundaries that are used, not always consistently, to define contemporary urbanization present as multiple and multiplying sites of contestation, sometimes functioning in parallel, sometimes at odds. The forms and modes of contestation over such boundary determinations are related to the more common depictions of contestations over urbanization – debates framed in terms of the size, form, location, or constituency of specific urban developments; debates framed in terms of progressing towards or harking back to the rural and the urban and cognate categories of urbanization; debates framed in terms of the speed and direction of these transitions – but they are not fully contiguous or coterminous. As such, the degree of uncertainty expressed over the supposed *transitions* of urbanization can be better understood as a fundamental insecurity over what it might mean to attempt to locate and define the appropriate phenomena of urbanization. The tension between the “city of hope” and “city of fear” (Bauman 2003) is modulated again: now the hopes and the fears attain to the possibilities and insecurities of the contested boundaries, which might settle and redefine urbanization for contemporary conditions, or which might demonstrate the indefinability of contemporary urbanization.

According to the dominant narratives, the transitions from modern to global urbanization are identified through the apparent dislocation of the spacetimes, forms, categories, and encounters of urbanization as it was previously known. Competing attempts to locate the dominant features of this contemporary global urbanization serve, when read together, to highlight its dislocation. The problem with the subsequent claim that these transitions both generate and respond to transitions in contemporary politics is that by implication, the metanarratives of politics – the boundaries of its spatiotemporalities, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies – are similarly dislocated. In this complicated context, Kelowna becomes a valuable, if counter-intuitive, site of investigation: a place that easily satisfies the transition narratives of modern urbanization as social, cultural, economic, and political development, and just as easily satisfies the narrative of a transition from modern to contemporary global urbanization – but only if the counter-narratives of exclusions, colonizations, inequalities, and uncertainties are ignored. The range of political boundaries that enable the transition narratives of urbanization are, in Kelowna as elsewhere, more uncertain and more contested than the transition narratives themselves allow. By questioning how the boundaries operate, how they are drawn, how they are stabilized, and under what conditions they might be destabilized, it is possible to unsettle the boundaries that enable these narratives.

## **ESSAY THREE: Unstable Political Boundaries and Tentative Aporetic Methods**

### **Elaborating the problematic gap in geographic imaginaries of urbanization**

The uncertainties of urbanization in Kelowna cause the uncertainties of claims to politicize urbanization and urbanize politics to proliferate and destabilize. Rather than proceeding by trying to establish a firm analytical terrain, a move that would be premature, or misguided, it is possible to shift the mode of question and site of concern again, complicating the narrative further by highlighting how debates about urbanization in Kelowna present as debates about some of the most persistent definitions of politics: what it means to live together, on what basis to build and define community (including inclusions and exclusions), where to locate community, what relationships to establish between personal and communal identity, how to define and secure the good life that supports both, and how to justify the authority to decide. Several elements that are traditionally claimed to be central to modern political life – community, identity, authenticity, security – frequently remain central in debates over and analyses of contemporary urbanization in Kelowna, even as they are recognized as being contestable and unstable. If a political transition were underway, you might expect to see these terms no longer relevant, or radically reconfigured; instead, what becomes visible is a pattern of obsessive use and nostalgic mourning which suggests a different dynamic at play. Thus this exploration of the politics of urbanization in Kelowna will make temporary use of this provisional account of politics in order to draw attention to these patterns.

### **The politics of the good life: community, authenticity, authority I**

From early on in Kelowna's urbanization process, residents recognized the challenge of building a community when community changed over time, and when definitions or visions of community similarly changed over time:

There are people who think that Kelowna is not the community it was 25 years ago and has lost something, but people moving here from Toronto thinks [sic] this is the last pristine community around. It all depends on

your point of view (Kelowna's long-range planner at the time, quoted in Whysall 1992: n.p.).

This struggle to continue to use the term community despite its uncertainties suggests that, although residents experience the transformations of urbanization, they also experience the need to make the new conform to old categories, even when there was little agreement over what those old categories entailed. Forms of urbanization that have been extensively critiqued as creating hollow, eviscerated community are still approached in these terms, such as Helfand's (2010/2011: 19) description of her photo essay of the residential development in Kelowna's hillsides as a process of "document[ing] the birth of an instant community, a new suburb." This usage suggests that "community" is a barely applicable term in this context, that its use to describe these "instant" suburbs is a betrayal of the depths of social connection that the term is meant to entail, while simultaneously suggesting that it is inescapable as a term, that there is no alternative to its use. As Kelowna's growth has become more rapid and more extensive, the sense of the loss or absence of community has grown apace:

I wouldn't call [Kelowna] a community. Here it seems to be about speculation and making a dollar. What we're doing is completely unsustainable (Rick Shea, resident and member of Citizens for Responsible Planning, quoted in Parnell 2007: n.p.).

Here, the economic development narrative that underpins the dominant account of urbanization in Kelowna also undermines the foundations of stable community. But precisely because it is the transformations of urbanization that, in these uses of community, seem to make real community impossible, the desire for community remains strong. The old category of community may no longer fit, but that ensures it is used with a sense of loss or nostalgia. In the first example, it is hollowed out even as it is applied to the instant suburb; in the second example, it is appealed to again even as the complaint is made that community has been irrevocably hollowed out by urbanization.

The stakes of building and maintaining a strong community are raised when it becomes clear that the possibilities of both shared and individual political identity are framed by the form of community. Thus the historical pattern of growth in Kelowna, so common in narratives of urbanization, of spatial spread over time that absorbs formally distinctive communities, creates the conditions for the heterogeneity of communal

identities that supports claims about Kelowna's urban status: "[l]ike most growing cities with distinctive neighbourhoods, Kelowna comes with a variety of character identities – some good, some bad depending on your personal bias" (Gerding 2010: n.p.). The specificity of identities both confirms the presence of community – each community has an identity, every identity marks an existing community – and challenges the notion of Kelowna as a urban community with a shared identity: "...amalgamating existing communities into one city, as happened to Kelowna in the early 1970s, doesn't always create a unified city... Historic identities don't disappear very quickly, if ever..." (Gerding 2010: n.p.). Even in the unincorporated areas that have surrounded Kelowna (before and after annexation), their Electoral Area status, with its attendant electoral representation, contributed to building political identities in rural areas (Meligrana 2003: 135). By implication, one of the repeated expectations of urban politics is the need to integrate these identities into an over-arching, inclusive urban identity when possible and, when not, to manage effectively their particularities. It becomes easy to see an urban world of pluralist identity politics, with communal identities judged ("some good, some bad"), their demands negotiated, their interests more or less equally represented.

Paradoxically, then, the transformations of urbanization have increased and diversified Kelowna's communities, and its identities, while simultaneously threatening the viability of any of its communal identities, either as neighbourhoods or as a unified city. Considering Christos Dikeakos' contemporary photograph *Kelowna, B.C.*, which was part of the Oasis centennial exhibition at the Kelowna Art Gallery, MacHardy (2005/2006: 101) suggests that "[i]n Dikeakos's work – one of the few pieces in the show with an urban theme – a GMC truck with Washington plates sits in front of the kitsch Ogoogo WELCOME sign, written in five languages, which greets visitors arriving in Kelowna. Kelowna has lost any sense of identity, it implies, in its rush to welcome consumerism, tourism, and the inauthentic." Critiques of a pluralist, representative urban politics are easy to mobilize – surely, whatever urban contemporary urban politics is, it is more complex than this enabled by this simplistic modern account – but it is more difficult to escape the repercussions and resonances of this drive to locate the authentic as a foundation for proper community, and thus proper politics. A commitment to authenticity takes on a peculiar form in the foundation of modern liberal politics (Taylor

1992), and this commitment remains strong in efforts to understand the gains and losses of Kelowna's urbanization. Reflecting on the growth that transformed the Glenmore Valley north of the city centre from a ranching and orcharding community to a suburban neighbourhood, UBCO urban geographer Bernard Momer suggests that

Glenmore's sterility originates in the fact that it was a rural area only some seven years ago, when fruit production gave it a truly local identity. Now, Glenmore could very well be a suburb of Toronto, Vancouver, or even Los Angeles. ... The lost connection with the origin of Glenmore, a place once called *Starvation Flats*, is a loss of identity. There are still traces of the origin of the City, but little is left to remind the population and even the tourist, that Kelowna was once dependent on agriculture and cattle raising. ... There is a tremendous potential to establish an Indigenous culture, similar to what is found in Europe where each region has an identity, creating a sense of differentiation between areas (Momer 1998: 75).

It is not coincidence or contingency that the ability to establish an authentic "Indigenous" settler urban culture and identity depends on the displacement of the Indigenous Okanagan Syilx people, both politically and spatiotemporally (this rural history of Glenmore Valley was made possible by the political and geographical exclusion of the Syilx from their land) and conceptually and analytically (this account of what it would mean to develop an "Indigenous" community in Kelowna depends upon their continued exclusion); rather, it is central to the modern political narrative of authenticity, which treasures the simple, the rural, the undeveloped, and the authentic, but only within the terms of the developmental narrative that sees these as the foundation for the proper progress towards personal and communal maturity.

These claims about and desires for authenticity offer a window into the constitutive boundaries of urbanization, depending as they do upon the resonances between particular uses of the rural and the urban, nature and culture, traditional past and modern present, there and here, local and global, and even old world and new world. These boundaries do not work as simple binaries and direct homologies: the overlaps, amplifications, and attenuations are more complicated than that, as the subsequent essay will elaborate. The possibilities of local place, the necessity of community, and the impossibility of urban authenticity seem unavoidable, for "...as agricultural capacity diminishes, so, too, does a form of integration that fosters community. What then will be

the basis of neighbourhood? ... a string of Tim Hortons and big box stores arguably moves us towards a homogenized Okanagan, one that lacks authenticity. We might as well be in Ontario” (Hessing 2010/2011: 127). The threat that urbanization poses to communal life, and thus to the perceived possibilities of politics, is that it undermines authenticity, continually figured as the ability to maintain a connection to the foundations, the roots, the origins.

This backward cast is itself an amplification of the orientation to the past that not only tempers but helps to delineate urbanization: the push for forward progress is defined against the past condition and but also leads to a continual need to construct and reconstruct accounts of this past. Redolent with nostalgic imaginaries, accounts of Kelowna begin to take the form of mythology rather than history. Yet this mythologizing process is not only a backward-looking phenomenon. Instead, there is an ongoing pattern of projection onto Kelowna, of the production of an imaginary of Kelowna by waves of newcomers. The early British settlers, arriving in what was the place before Kelowna, “didn’t know what the hell they were coming out to in the first place” and so, to fill the void of place as the unknown or uncertain, “they just imagined a sort of beautiful halo around everything” (MacHardy 2005/2006: 95). What is now repeated as the origin story of Kelowna’s urbanization – white settlers building an authentic rural community with a firm identity rooted in agricultural practice and cultural homogeneity – can be understood as a story that, from its origins, was unreal, a projection made possible by first displacing existing Indigenous communities and recreating “Kelowna” as a blank white screen. Richard Prince, an artist who was represented in the Oasis exhibit, “speaks of Kelowna and the Okanagan as ‘a sort of mythical summer vacation land,’” like an ““imaginary paradise of tropical islands”” (MacHardy 2005/2006: 94), emphasizing that the projections continue both within and across time, just as they continue to unsettle notions of place as a singular location in universal space. This sense of Kelowna as a site of multiple mythological projections – of pasts, presents, and futures; of heres, theres, and nowheres – continues unabated, despite the belief that urbanization has ensured the creation of Kelowna as an actual, material city in this place.

And yet, despite Kelowna’s growing urban status, for many newcomers in recent decades, just as in the past, it has never been urban enough. Reflecting on the experience

of being a newcomer in Kelowna, and how preconceptions and projections influenced her photo essay of the new mountain suburb, Helfand (2010/2011: 17) writes:

I moved to the Okanagan from Toronto in 1998. Like many a newcomer from the paved streets of a large urban centre, I was seduced by the BC landscape. I don't know exactly what I expected to find in my new location, but somewhere deep in my subconscious mind I clung to a timeless mythic construct about living in the mountains.

Against the dominant transition narrative of urbanization, in which people from the rural countryside are drawn to the dynamic city for social, economic, or cultural opportunities, the attraction of Kelowna for many people, for many years, has been precisely its status of being less-developed than the places from which the settlers have moved. The “mythic constructs” of what has been lost to urbanization elsewhere have been projected onto Kelowna as a place that, through its perceived natural beauty and its perceived earlier stage on the development path, could still be understood as more closely bound to the rural, and the forms of authentic communal identity that this enabled. The dream, for many settlers across many decades, was not to remain rural, but to have the possibility open again of urbanizing differently, of avoiding the risks and threats to community that are posed by the urban, and creating the ultimate mythic community: the authentic city, and thus an ideal political community. In one telling example, promotional material produced by Kelowna's Board of Trade in 1908 argues that Kelowna must become *the right sort of city*: not a great “industrial” city, plagued with illness, poverty, difference, and conflict, but a “desirable” city, smaller in scale and wedded to elements of rural life (Bennett 1998: 75). In this vision of Kelowna, it is crucial to become a city, as urbanization according to the dominant transition narrative confers the stability of economic and social advancements, but it is just as crucial not to become the wrong sort of city, one where the break from rural life is complete and its stabilizing, ordering authenticity is lost.

The attraction of Kelowna, then, has often been located in the sense that it is at an earlier stage of the urban development trajectory than many places around the world, whether at the outset of its white colonial history, when it was seen as terra nullius, and thus as an opportunity to both follow and reform European development patterns, or now, when despite its growing urban status it retains significant material markers, living

memories, and circulating imaginaries of being a rural community. This never-quite-as-urban-as-elsewhere element has led repeatedly to the belief that Kelowna offers the possibility of avoiding the pitfalls of modern and contemporary urbanization, giving residents and newcomers a sense of being able to create a new form of urban communal life. Kelowna, more so than many places, has continually been conceived as a site of promise, as a site where a sustainable urban community might be developed, even prior to the use of the language of sustainable urbanization. The challenge with the desire for sustainable urban development, as was broached earlier, is that it so often subordinates the dream of sustainability to the focus on development, with its primarily economic determination. These risks are increasingly recognized in Kelowna, as examples grow here, as elsewhere, of the ways that

...development typically favours some interests at the expense of others. The gentrification and 'lifestyle' marketing of urban downtowns throughout North America is a case in point. 'Sustainability' greenwashes development (Hessing 2010/2011: 123).

Further, the perceived threats are not just to the community itself, but more importantly, to the perceived foundations of the community, to what sustains the *possibility of authentic community*: in this case, the notion of place, and specifically a human place within nature:<sup>33</sup>

It's time to ...savour, celebrate, and retain the Valley's natural and social history as the keystone to its authentic character. This is the challenge for a sustainable Okanagan (Hessing 2010/2011: 134).

The impacts of urbanization are such that sustaining the environment that supports the city requires, in turn, producing a form of city that can sustain the environment, and thus, for instance, recognition of the need to approach the conservation of the endangered Okanagan grasslands through the redevelopment of Kelowna as a sustainable city (KCN 2007: n.p.):

The lack of protection for this [endangered] landscape is particularly noteworthy when we acknowledge its cultural capital. The aesthetic

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<sup>33</sup> This sense of a split between nature and human culture, and of the need to maintain close ties between nature and human culture, has been elaborated and carefully critiqued within what has been broadly termed, for a time at least, the Urban Political Ecology literature (for example: Cronon 1991; Desfor and Keil 2004; Gandy 2002 and 2006; Harvey 1996; Heynen et al. 2006; Keil 2003 and 2005; Swyngedouw 1996 and 2006; Whitehead 2005).

significance of these species is integral to the ways that we experience and think of the Okanagan. ... The loss of biodiversity results not only in the loss of home for other life forms; it also results in the diminishment of 'home' for us (Hessing 2010/2011: 131).

This imbrication of community and place substantially raises the stakes on the meaning of and necessity for authenticity, placing a spatial limitation on community – it must be authentically of here, of this place – even as its possibilities are defined by the spatial comparisons of urbanization understood in dominant terms as a shared path of development. The desire to create a new mode of urban community is similarly limited by the temporal complications of urbanization, namely the backward cast that locates the possibility of future sustainability in the natural and social past of the Valley. And these temporal commitments are again delimited, in turn, by the commitment to *authenticity* as the condition of possibility for a sustainable urban community, even as authenticity generates the practices of mythologizing, projecting, and imagining in order to produce and reproduce origin stories and future visions. Thus the spatiotemporal structure of *authenticity* as a foundation for community introduces a crucial point of insecurity: the nostalgia for a mythologized past and the necessity of a better future create the present as never authentic enough and always at risk of getting worse, not better.

Ultimately, despite the extrapolation that contemporary global urbanization is such a radical transformation of both urbanization and of politics as to require the redefinition of such terms as of community, identity, authenticity, or their erasure in favour of new and more adequate categories, the contextualized use of these terms in Kelowna suggests the extent to which they continue to circulate within parameters delineated by the configuration of modern politics, which in turn has overlaps and intersections with the parameters of prior political configurations. Echoing back even to Platonic and Aristotelian engagements with the good life as the necessary contiguity between the city and politics, “the migrants who came to the Valley... early in the twentieth century” are described as undertaking “to establish orchards and find the good life” (Wynn 2010/2011: 3). This underlying vision of politics as a concern with the good life of the community remains over time, and more than 150 years after the “settlement” of Kelowna, a sense of growing resource scarceness, and thus of the insecurity of the community, prompts the question to be posed again: “What *are* the basic requirements

for living a ‘good’ life?’” (Hessing 2010/2011: 124; emphasis in original). While never explicitly engaged as a question of politics, the use of this heavy phrase evokes a certain set of imaginaries or constructs of political community, even as it echoes a pattern of use that seeks to evade political engagement. This pattern of exclusions and hierarchies is repeated in the assessment by urban planning expert Dr. Goldberg that “a ‘not in my backyard mentality’ has often hurt development that would otherwise benefit the greater region, when instead, the ‘greater good has to dominate’” (quoted in Paterson 2012b). Crucial questions of who decides inclusion into this community, and what constitutes its best present and future, are again elided.

From this contextualized perspective, “urbanization” can be understood less as a transition narrative and more as a site of debate through which many crucial categories that have defined the possibilities of politics are configured and reconfigured, doubted and affirmed. In other words, the perceived challenges and problems of urbanization in Kelowna become synecdochic of the perceived challenges and problems of building, maintaining, and securing some form of politics, typically figured as the parallel of and relationship between political community and political subjectivity or identity. The extended implication is two-fold: first, that debates over urbanization are debates over political possibilities, if limited by the familiar and seemingly inescapable terms of modernity, and second, that narratives of urbanization as a wholesale political transition are over-stated, leaving the temporal and spatial dynamics of transformation and repetition unexamined.

### **Dreams of security/threats of insecurity**

Even in the midst of what is considered by the dominant urbanization narratives of Kelowna as its successful urban development, the perceived need for urban community to be an authentic instantiation of the communal good life, rather than merely profitable, means that the death of the city continually lurks, its long life desired but not always assured. Despite Kelowna’s rapid growth leading to the new millennium, the downtown core, the historic heart of the city, was characterized as being in dire straits:

[a]s it heads into its centennial year [2005], Kelowna is fighting a life and death struggle to keep its downtown alive. While few downtown

would be willing to admit it, the once vibrant heart of the city is beating so slow these days that economic defibrillation is needed to get it off life-support (Waters 2005: n.p.).

The city of hope and the city of fear reappear within this dynamic, this time as the desire for urban security and the fear of urban insecurity. Within this context, the language of urban revitalization and rehabilitation indicates that the political stakes of debates over urbanization are much higher than economic security, or security recast as socio-ecological sustainability. As one resident indicates, in response to the plan to revitalize Kelowna's downtown core with the four-block Comprehensive Development Zone (CD21 Zone) of commercial and residential high rises: "Kelowna's downtown core has been looking a little tattered and worn in recent years, but to replace it with four blocks of towers – soaring to as high as 30 storeys – would be like *selling our soul to the devil*" (Steeves 2007: n.p.; emphasis added). Such language recalls Kelowna's disproportionately conservative Christian population. But, it also recalls a dominant story of modernity as the problem of transubstantiating the religious authority of premodernity into an equally incontestable earthly authority: thus, according to this narrative of modern politics, was sovereignty born.

The language and imaginaries through which people in Kelowna frame and engage urbanization suggests that while urbanization is supposed to reconfigure modern politics beyond recognition, it is here replaying, rather than replacing, some of modernity's core political problematics, not the least of which is the problem of political authority in the figure of the sovereign. The more insecurity, the more need for the sovereign, as many in Kelowna maintain. The call for sovereign political authority can articulate a seemingly positive vision, as does the resident who states that he wants "to support a leader who will seize the opportunity and guide Kelowna toward the great city it has the potential to be" (Janmaat 2011). But it is all too common to see how quickly it transmutes to the negative, the cancellation of some possibility of participatory political community through the exercise of authority:

We need government bodies that can respond to this sort of threat faster, intellectuals willing to stick their neck out to say something about it in public and politicians who take a stand and stick with it, whether they're elected to do so or not (Smith 2012b).

Thus, while never broached in these terms, the ongoing reliance on imaginaries of community, identity, and authenticity, with their temporal patterns of casting back to the past and forward to the present, and their conceptual patterns of security and insecurity, set the conditions of possibility for continued invocations of the need for sovereignty to clarify the terms of contemporary communal life. If urbanization is indeed transforming modern politics, its foundational categories of political community and political subjectivity become increasingly insecure and that much more important to define and affirm, collectively if possible, but by a claim to sovereign authority if not: politics must be protected, even from itself.

The hope that rapid urbanization might shift the boundaries towards desirable, sustainable, and secure urban living meets the fear that rampant urbanization will bring Kelowna to the limits of its capacity. These forces in turn generate the shared focus on and disparate visions of sustainable urbanization. The insecurity of the unstable boundaries of urbanization produces, in particular, a notion of sustainable urbanization as a solution that emphasizes balance and integration: the chronological transition narratives of urbanization do not hold, and narratives of inclusion, of sustaining a ‘both/and’ relationship across the determinative boundaries, are offered in their place. With insecurity of and across boundaries as the perceived problem, the question becomes how to hold the apparently oppositional categories together. Or, to put it differently, the goal becomes determining what relationship between categories and across boundaries will enable a healthy, prosperous, sustainable urban condition.

Yet the prevalence of these boundaries also generates not only the possibilities but also the limits of security. Sustainable urbanization may redefine urbanization as a process of finding a way to balance rural and urban, nature and culture, and so on, rather than focusing solely on development and advancement, but it also, still, presumes, mobilizes, and reinforces the sense of a given, even determinative structure of the relevant boundaries of urbanization. Thus the question is posed whether “we [can] discuss sustainability in the Okanagan without acknowledging our embeddedness in a global economy?” (Hessing 2010/2011: 124), with sustainable urbanization figured both as a challenge to unchecked economic development and a confirmation that global economic development determines global urbanization and its effects. Sustainable

urbanization is not only insufficient as a solution to the perceived problems of rapid, rampant urbanization and the myriad insecurities and unsettlingings it produces; it is exemplary of the way the boundaries that are supposed to be exceeded and transformed continue to shape and define the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of urbanization. The threats and uncertainties of contemporary global urbanization seem to exceed the categorical terms we have for identifying, defining, experiencing, and narrating urbanization, but their continued presence as objects of debate also suggest that they are still relevant – though how, and why, is as uncertain as the boundaries themselves.

### **The reiterative patterns of the limit experience**

At stake in this articulation of urbanization as contested and contesting boundary practices are the security and insecurity of competing forms of collective life that are emplaced and displaced, materially and in and through imaginaries, by the boundaries that delineate possible, necessary, and impossible paths of urbanization. Understanding how and why these relational boundaries operate is crucial, particularly if it is the case the urbanization has made these boundaries, and the modern forms of politics they sustained, obsolete in empirical terms.

The pattern of obsessive use and nostalgic mourning of some of these central categories of modern politics suggests a different dynamic than a clear, linear transition narrative. Rather than simply leaving these categories behind, or reconfiguring them for the arriving urban age, residents seem to be experiencing the possibility, necessity, and limits of these categories, driven to exceed them and just as driven to continually reinstate them. In other words, through urbanization they are experiencing the limits of the narrative of modern politics, but rather than transition beyond this narrative, they appear to be driven back by these limits, driven to re-secure the familiar categories of modern life. This pattern takes many forms in Kelowna. It shows through in attempts to redefine the content of the terms of the transition narratives of urbanization – of rural and urban, nature and culture, past and present, local and global, traditional and modern, state and market – and to redefine how the relationships between these terms are understood. It shows through in attempts to rethink and relocate the formalized politics of urbanization,

from municipal government, to economic or market governance, to everyday practices of diverse and diffused urbanisms. And it shows through in efforts to rethink some of the foundational terms that have supported broader definitions of politics, terms such as community, identity, authenticity, and security.

What is consistent between these different, disparate iterations of the pattern is that in each case, the limits are experienced, generating both the desire to surpass them and a seemingly inability to do so. Focusing on the etymological meaning of urbanization as becoming like or being made like brings to light the patterns of tensions between immanent self-governance and transcendent authority: the promise of properly political self-governance, in the individual and the community, so long as you are willing to accept certain limits, in terms of both subjectivity and community. It clarifies, when followed through the contextual specificity of Kelowna, how the very terms that are supposed to enable the vision of politics as immanent self-governance – community, identity, authenticity, security – open the insecurity through which the desire for sovereignty operates and circulates.

What becomes clear through the patterns of repetition of these terms is the extent to which this account of what and where political community and political identity are in Kelowna forms a consistent foundation to accounts of urbanization and its various transitions, though like most foundations, residing under the surface, hidden from view. Kelowna was built on a sandy estuary with a high water table, and thus foundations are tricky in Kelowna, as attempts to urbanize, in the form of the requisite high rises, has made clear. Projects are continually held up, reconfigured, or cancelled, because this shifting ground makes foundations necessary and impossible: the more spectacular the construction, the more necessary and more unreliable the foundation. The temporality of this nostalgia is not just a stubborn inability to let go of the perceived past, but rather another confirmation that whatever the dynamic of change and transformation that drives urbanization, it takes a form other than linear, chronological, and progressive. Rethinking urbanization in relational terms helps open the possibility for complicating this dynamic, but it does not, on its own, account for this peculiar feature of repetition and return, this obsessive tendency to try to rebuild and resecure the foundations of a structure that simultaneously seem to be necessary for political life and already long since made

irrelevant to contemporary politics. Likewise, the solution is nowhere near as easy as redefining authenticity, identity, or community for the new urban age, because their foundations within the structure of modern politics are too strong to demolish and too fragile to rebuild. Precisely because the configurations of spacetime, ontology, epistemology and phenomenology that gave modern politics meaning and effective force are said to be reconfigured, the uncertainties of contemporary urbanization seem to generate the uncertainties in being able to make any political claims.

If this is the case, then on what grounds might the possibility of a political engagement with contemporary urbanization be possible? The problem appears frustratingly circular, all the while spinning around a central void. The transitions of urbanization are so profound as to require and make possible alternative modes of political community and political authority, but still so new that it is not clear which spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of politics will be necessary, which will be appropriate, which will be desirable, and which will be impossible. This political uncertainty is at the centre of the debates over whether or not Kelowna is a proper city, whether or not urbanization is desirable, and what form of city Kelowna should become: they are debates over political possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities in this debatably urban community. This uncertainty, then, must be understood not as a barrier to political analysis and engagement, but as the political problematic that needs to be directly analyzed and engaged. The challenge that this reading of the analytical problems of urbanization poses, ultimately, is to change from thinking about urbanization as a series of linear transitions – spatiotemporal, subjective, political – to thinking about urbanization as a political logic with a very different dynamic: one characterized by oscillations between progress and return; one characterized by idealizations and demonizations, security and threats; one characterized by the simultaneous presence of possibility, necessity, and impossibility.

The problem of urban life as a problem of uncertainty within spatiotemporal change is posed not only in social, economic, or cultural terms, but, implicitly, in *political* terms that are broadly familiar, though not indisputable: what it might mean to live a communal good life under these conditions, where and how authentic community can be created and sustained in this world, who gets to participate, and how we are to

know and decide when so much is uncertain. The political problems, challenges, and claims being circulated by and through what is captured by the term of the urbanization of Kelowna work not only through the uncertain boundaries (rural/urban, and so on), or through uncertainty in some of the foundational categories of modern politics (community, identity, authenticity, even sovereignty), but through a more complex and disparate set of contentions over the spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of politics. Tracing the narratives of urbanization in Kelowna against the dominant narratives of modern and global urbanization makes explicit the uncertainties involved in accounting for and engaging with contemporary urbanization: continual attempts are made to determine the spacetimes, forms, categories, and phenomenologies of urbanization, in Kelowna as within other places, yet the very transformative dynamic of urbanization that draws attention also repels definitive explanation precisely because these configurations seem to continually transform.

### **Aporetic boundaries: a method for thinking unthinkable thoughts**

The engagement with Kelowna followed here simultaneously suggests an interpretive analytical approach and recognizes a level of impossibility in making a definitive or determinative analytical claim about urbanization in Kelowna. While both dominant narratives and popular tendencies hold that Kelowna is a site of urbanization, a site that is finally becoming, or immanently will become, a proper city, Kelowna generates its incitement to further encounters as much from the vestigial, seemingly irreducible elements of the non-urban for which Kelowna is just as popularly recognized. In interesting ways, Kelowna presents itself as already a city and, still pursuing its path of urbanization, not yet a city. It poses, in unique but widely troubling terms, the problem of what kind of claims can be made – about Kelowna, about contemporary urbanization, about contemporary politics – if we approach the uncertainties encountered here not as a problem to be solved but as an opportunity to engage with equally problematic questions of the political implications of method. The political problem of any methodological choice is that it would seem to rely on determining a configuration of the very problematiques – spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology – of

urbanization and politics that are, so clearly, subject to transformation, redetermination, and fundamental insecurity.

The deeply contextualized encounter with Kelowna also suggests a hint of how, methodologically, it might be possible to proceed to engage these problematic boundaries without predetermining the parameters of these boundaries. The hint is encapsulated in the injunction, repetitively encountered, to think unthinkable thoughts: at this point, a seemingly accurate description of how it might be possible to proceed with an analysis of the patterns and problematiques in play, why it is necessary to engage these patterns and problematiques *through* their instability, and why it is always impossible to make any claims that can hold, securely, into future conditions. Recognizing that thinking unthinkable thoughts places this work on the oscillating boundaries between decision and indecision suggests that this encounter with the politics of urbanization in Kelowna takes place, and makes its place, within an aporia, or multiple aporia, while also suggesting that the political implications of this encounter are still very much uncertain. In the remainder of this essay, *the aporetic logic as a non-determinative method of political theory* is introduced, in its possibilities and limits. Then, in the fourth and final essay, this methodology is elaborated, necessarily, through its contextualization within Kelowna.

### **The city as aporia**

In a recent letter to the editor regarding whether a linear stretch of lakeside property should be established as a park or a commercial property, a resident lamented the lack of forward momentum and future-oriented vision in Kelowna – referring, in this case, not to the need for economic development, but to the inability to envision and plan for a time when land is more scarce, ‘nature’ even more externalized, and the need for urban parks that enable shared access to the lake even more critical to the good life of the *city*. For this resident, “[w]e are a city. We are not a small town. I believe we need to start thinking like a city” (Janmaat 2011: n.p.). However, it is not at all clear what it means to *think like a city*. This formulation highlights the critical gap between the certainty this resident proclaims (we know what we are: we are a city) and the uncertainty that is seemingly experienced in this condition (we don’t know how to be a city: we don’t know how to think like a city). The gap, or void, that seems to haunt and continually displace

the narratives of urbanization in Kelowna as the materialization of a city in this place, is the gap between the ‘city’ that Kelowna might claim to be and the ‘city’ it needs to learn how to emulate, *to become like*, because it is not yet this. When focus shifts, this gap takes on different dimensions and different tonal hollows. It can be the gap between the city that Kelowna is supposed to be becoming and its uncertain, unstable urban imaginaries. It can even be the gap between how urbanization is analyzed and how it is experienced and engaged in Kelowna. It can be the gap between the vision of *becoming like* the urban and experiences of *being made like* the urban. These various iterations all point to an impassible gap or impenetrable void between Kelowna and its visions, both shared and conflicting, of imminent city status.

This inability to fully define or account for Kelowna as a city echoes Shields’ (1996) suggestion that ‘the city’ is an aporetic site. Fundamentally unknowable, the complexity of the city will always exceed attempts to capture it as a singular reality. The notion of the aporia appears in frequent but disparate contexts, with little shared meaning other than the void at its core: the aporia is a figure of irresolvable contradiction, of uncertainty, undecidability, or impenetrability. Certainly, it appears as though this element of uncertainty is constitutive of the encounter with Kelowna, with the uncertainties at stake ranging from definitions and location of city status, to engagements with and outcomes from perceived political processes, to notions of authenticity, community, and the good life, and even to foundational configurations of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology through which any of these uncertainties would have any hopes of being addressed.

While the possibility of engaging with this uncertainty in Kelowna on aporetic terms is appealing, it is also uncertain how this might contribute to a political engagement with this place. Walker (2012) states that modern politics is aporetic, by which he means that there is an aporetic point of undecidable authority that structures the simultaneously nested and parallel relationship between the individual, the state, and the international system of states. This undecidability has led the aporia, as a concept, to be criticized as being too negative to be used effectively as a tool of positive political practice and

analysis.<sup>34</sup> More significantly, as a claim about the central characteristic of “the political,” the aporia has been criticized as being intimately connected to practices of political authorization, idealization, and prescription. Magnusson (2011b), in particular, outlines in detail how claims about the aporia of modern politics depoliticize possible sites of engagement, and ultimately feed back into the problems of sovereign authority in modern politics. He argues that those who hold onto an aporia at the center of politics forego the capacity to develop an account of politics; the reliance on an aporia of politics as an unknowable core enables authors to make claims about politics without having to risk anything by giving an account of politics. Indeed, for Magnusson (2011b: 11-12), this inability not only opens the door between analyses of the actual and idealizations of the possible – risky practices that have already been encountered in these narratives of urbanization in Kelowna – but also effaces academic authorizations of a political ideal – as is arguably apparent in the urban geography literature’s practices to urbanize politics and politicize urbanization.

Despite the two strong, if seemingly contradictory, claims that Walker and Magnusson make about the relationship between the aporia and the possibilities, or impossibilities, of politics, the aporia itself has been under-theorized as a political site, concept, practice, or method. The element of uncertainty, unknowability, or undecidability, in itself, appears insufficient to generate a mode of political analysis: certainly, people live, work, and play in Kelowna, and thus politics happens, exists, instantiates. It is necessary, then, to develop a way not simply to theorize but to politicize the aporia: to make it capable of providing an account, not just of the dynamics of urbanization, but of politics.

### **Aporia as boundary practice and political logic**

In his single most extended consideration of the aporia, Derrida (1993) suggests that there is no such thing as an aporia, as a naturalized, external object. Instead, there are only aporetic boundary practices that, in delineating one term from another, place them in a necessarily co-constitutive relationship. In more concrete terms, these boundary

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<sup>34</sup> This assumes that Massey (2005: 49–54) would extend her reading of Derrida’s notion of *différance* to include his use of the term *aporia* (Derrida 1993).

practices produce pairs of concepts that can then be read in positivist terms as distinct, even if in binary, or as relational in dialectical or assemblage terms: boundaries between and bonding rural and urban, nature and culture, tradition and modern, local and global. Less obviously, these boundary practices also produce determinations that are seemingly singular rather than binary, such as are found in claims about community, identity, authenticity, security, vitality, and politics. The aporia, understood as a practice of drawing a line that determines boundaries and delimits the entities or concepts on either side (Derrida 1993), offers an analytical approach that centres on the inherent undecidability, and hence insecurity, of boundaries. This insecurity arises because the boundary, as a delineating “edge-line,” is “threatened from its first tracing” (Derrida 1993: 11), setting in motion a dynamic of destabilization and restabilization. In other words, an aporia generates not simple uncertainty but a constitutive indeterminacy or impossibility, which is what Walker (2010) captures in his articulation of the aporia of modern politics being the inability to decide on the final authority between the individual, the state, or the sovereign state because to do so ensures the impossibility of the other two; yet as the other two clearly remain operative, no decision can have been taken. An aporetic boundary, then, is both the site and the production of a limit experience, and thus includes the limits of knowledge, the limits of comprehension, the limits of security, and the limits of politics.

Derrida accepts certain boundaries that effectively restrict politics even as they delineate its proper spheres, and as such his theorization of the aporia is limited politically and needs to be mutated. It was suggested in both of the previous essays that a politicized account of relationality requires giving attention to the practices that enable the governing and self-governing of co-constitutive relations: how and why these boundaries are drawn, why these entities and concepts are co-generated, why other possibilities never arise. Analyzing the logic of relationality that is at the heart of processes of urbanization opens the possibility of speaking of a *political logic of urbanization*, an account not concerned with pre-mapped spatiotemporalities, given ontological conditions, epistemological certainties, or known phenomenological experiences, but rather with the mode of embedded governing that produces particularly solid, effective and affective configurations of these problematiques. It becomes possible

to suggest, now, that the distinctive boundary practices that generate aporia may indicate a distinctive political logic of urbanization. The engagement with the void that seems to haunt attempts to provide an account of urbanization in Kelowna becomes an engagement with an account of politics that takes this difficulty of aporetic logic as central: not as a single, central aporia of politics, but as multiple aporetic boundary practices, each of which makes claims to center politics by designating the boundary between politics and its limits. Following Derrida, though perhaps not too closely, the uncertainty or indeterminacy of Kelowna can be approached as a limit experience derived from an aporetic encounter with Kelowna: the limit of the urban, the limit of the local, the limit of whiteness, the limit of modernity, or the limit of the authentic identity.

On this aporetic understanding, Kelowna is not a singular objective place, but an ongoing, and at times incommensurable, set of effects of material and discursive productions that occur across multiple spatial and temporal registers, through practices that not only produce the necessary boundaries, but that govern which boundaries are drawn and with what effect. The account therefore does not, and cannot, address what or where Kelowna ‘really is,’ but rather what can be understood through practices that produce multiple accounts of Kelowna, each of which seems as real as the other, at least to some, in some places, at some times, and for some reasons. More importantly, an aporia cannot, itself, be known ‘as such,’ as it really is, in external, actual, objective terms, but only through its material, discursive, affective and effective implications (Derrida 1993: 72). An aporia can only be known through context, and then never finally, just like Kelowna. Yet if urbanization in Kelowna is simultaneously an aporetic site and an aporetic production, neither of which can be known as an external entity or concept but only through their *effect*, on what basis is Kelowna to be engaged? Only ever contextually, which is why the details and implications of this approach are worked through, to this point and more so in the remaining essay, not just in Kelowna but indivisibly *through* Kelowna. There is, and can be, minimal theorization of aporetic boundary practices and an aporetic political logic outside of their specific contextual iterations.

**Seeing like an (aporetic) city/representation matters**

The resident quoted above exhorts people in Kelowna, and particularly its leaders, to learn to think like a city. This parallels the similar exhortation that, if we are going to better understand politics in the contemporary world, we need to shift from “seeing like a state” to “seeing like a city” (Magnusson 2011a: 1-15). In Kelowna, at least, there is no agreement on what it might mean to think or see like a city, though at times it bears a resemblance to the skepticism of the dominant political ontologies of sovereignty that Magnusson articulates, and at times it references a skepticism of the epistemological claims that support and enable these dominant ontologies, though it does not generally use such language. The limitation of the exhortation to see or think like a city is that, as previous sections have intimated, ‘the city’ functions as a structure of imaginaries, with a complicated spatiotemporal pattern of idealizations and demonizations and a complicated encounter with the limit experience. Accepting the call to see like a city risks assuming and repeating the political transition narrative that plagues accounts of urbanization – in the past, we saw like states; now, in an urban world, we must see like a city – though Magnusson himself is careful not to do so (2011a: 11). It also risks repeating the political transition *metanarratives*, whereby the new urban world constitutes and confers a new spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology, and the task of analysis and engagement is to discover these in the urban environment and through them to re-establish a political logic suitable to the transformed world.

The shift to urbanization acknowledges these problems rather than dismisses them, allowing ‘the city’ to be taken up as an imaginary generated out of urbanization and continually influencing the possible trajectories of urbanization. As has been described previously and will be developed further, debates over urbanization in Kelowna continually invoke ‘the city’ as an “imagined environment” (Donald 1992: 427), sometimes in positive terms (the city of hope), sometimes in negative terms (the city of fear). The urbanization of Kelowna can, therefore, be approached as a material-symbolic “trans-discursive” (Shields 1996: 234) process of representing, emplacing, and displacing both ‘the city’ as a complicated, if generic, imaginary and particular imaginaries of ‘the city’ that have developed over time in this place (ibid.: 235). As such, both ‘the city’ and the processes of defining, shaping, or delimiting Kelowna as a (soon-to-be) city, operate through a process that is, “above all, a representation” (Donald 1992: 427), which, taken

here, means not that it is immaterial, but that recognizes the mutual enactments between materialities and imaginaries.

Shields argues that these representations can never get at or be taken for the “real” of the city – not because they obscure a deeper social, material, and discursive reality about Kelowna, but because ‘the city’ as a complex of imaginaries is fundamentally aporetic (Shields 1996: 227). While suggestive, the problem with Shield’s account of the aporetic city is two-fold. First, he focuses on the city, as the aporetic effect, rather than on urbanization as the complex of aporetic boundary practices. In effect, he emphasizes the outcome rather than the generative process, which causes him to elide the ways in which ‘the rural’ (and the various cognates of these terms) also function according to practices of representation of imaginaries. In turn, the challenging spatiotemporal dynamics and the confusion of inconsistent personal experience or phenomenal engagement is also elided. Such an account therefore represents a centring practice: while the place, form, category, and experience of the city may be uncertain, such an account claims that it is still, necessarily, the central category. The value of Kelowna, as a site, is that it makes it impossible to presume the primacy of ‘the city.’ Kelowna opens a window through which urbanization can be understood as a work in aporetic process, through the production of the complex boundaries through which urbanization has traditionally taken name, taken shape, and taken place: rural and urban, nature and culture, traditional and modern, local and global, and so on. Yet every claim to urban generates a not-urban and every claim to rural generates a not-rural, such that this structure leads to the continual tendency to attempt to define, locate, and fill the voids it generates. These aporetic boundary productions operate through spatiotemporalized and spatiotemporalizing images and imaginaries, of the present urban versus the past rural here; of the present rural versus the future urban here; of the present rural here and the present urban there; again, and so on.

The second problem with Shields’s account is that, by focusing on the outcome (the aporetic city) rather than the process (aporetic urbanization), Shields effectively essentializes and depoliticizes aporetic boundary practices, and by extension also essentializes and depoliticizes encounters with the social, spatiotemporal, and material effects of these practices. It has already been suggested that the aporetic practices of urbanization work through, or resonate with, a range of what are commonly recognized

as political registers: through claims to actual, possible, or necessary political sites and institutions, and particularly through claims about transitions in these; and through claims about community, identity, authenticity, and other foundational terms within modern politics. In other words, beyond its tendency to generate boundaries between rural and urban (which, even as these are supposed to be surpassed, are continually reinvoked in some way, even if only as imaginaries of the past that has been surpassed by the momentum of urbanization), it also generates boundaries between the secure, sustainable, appropriate city and the insecure, inauthentic, or unsustainable city, boundaries that work through continually transmuted imaginaries of the city of hope and the city of fear. This is the boundary between the city and its limits, and insofar as some form of actual or immanent city, some form of urban here or global urban everywhere, is said to be the shared condition of contemporary communal life, it produces the boundary between politics and its limits, a complex of imaginaries that constitute the debate over urbanization as the necessary, possible, and impossible spacetimes, forms, categories, and practices of politics.

The preceding encounters with Kelowna's narratives of urbanization suggest that the very simple definition of urbanization – becoming like or being made like the city – is an important indicator of the complexity of urbanization as an aporetic political practice. In one sense, becoming or being made like the city highlights that regardless of the extent of urban growth, there is a sense in which the actual urban can never be urban enough, never as urban as elsewhere, or, if taken in its extended, global or planetary sense, still never as urban as the future. This sense suggests a dual threat that continually locates urbanization as a source of insecurity: on the one hand, never urban enough, and on the other hand, always already too far from the safe solidity and homogeneity of the rural. In another sense, however, becoming like and being made like the urban highlights the encounter with competing claims to political authority, the self- or community-directed versus the externally imposed, the immanent versus the transcendent. Here, too, there is a dual threat: that of an irresolvable or undecidable conflict between these two modes of authority which leaves urbanization always insecure, but which, precisely because of the instability, uncertainty, or insecurity of urbanization – an indecision wrought not just by urbanization as change but by the aporetic void of urbanization – will always require a

decision on political authority. The aporetic political logic of urbanization suggests a way of thinking about the apparent tendency of urbanization to be implicated in claims of transitioning past the modern while always being driven back into the terms of the modern. Shields's decision on the aporetic city is one more instantiation of the decision to decide against uncertainty; a decision made through and permeated with imaginaries and the representation of imaginaries.

### **Aporetic urbanization: place-making and image-making**

The *projected image* of Kelowna, and imaginaries of what Kelowna is, was, and could be, have mattered for a good portion of its white settlement, development, and urbanization, as the collected visual art works of the Oasis exhibit (MacHardy 2005), Helfand's photo essay (Helfand 2010/2011), Bennett's history (Bennett 1998), and work by Luis Aguiar (Aguiar et al. 2005; Aguiar and Martin 2011) all make clear in very different ways. The predominant imaginary since the arrival of British immigrants in the late 1880s was that of the promised land, alternately figured as the opportunity to return to paradise before the fall (return to the rural from the urban expansions of Britain) or the arrival in paradise at the geographic and figurative end of the known world (the possibility of building a new sort of urban paradise for the future). Either way, "[t]he image of the oasis (or Eden) [was] a construct, a convenient lens through which immigrants in the Okanagan could frame and then develop a sense of place and belonging" (MacHardy 2005/2006: 99). A primary aspect of this process of framing and making place operated through mythologizations of Kelowna as the picturesque, which, as has already been suggested, continues to the present:

With few exceptions the Okanagan Landscape was the star of the show: there were orchards, vineyards, mountains, pristine hillsides, and sweeping panoramic views along Okanagan Lake. The contrast with the world outside the gallery was jarring: there were no views of the Okanagan Connector...; or of the high-rise towers that blocked views of the lake; of the hillsides carved up for development. In fact, there were almost no people to be found in the works comprising the exhibition (MacHardy 2005/2006: 93).

Amongst this overwhelmingly romanticized, depopulated vision of Kelowna as Oasis, amongst the repetition of water-colour representations of Kelowna's landscape, three

surveying and town planning maps stand out to MacHardy as “injecting an engineer’s geometric precision into the picturesque[;] they make the important point that, right from the start of white settlement in the Okanagan Valley, everybody, not just the artists, was looking at the land: and that Kelowna has always been up for grabs” (MacHardy 2005/2006: 96). McCulloch’s 1987 piece Glenmore Orchard III, effects a similar intervention into the romanticized claims about Kelowna’s landscape as a site of the naturally picturesque: “in its emphasis on the grid, this work also points out that, whatever our romantic attachments to them might be, orchards are examples of industrialized farming” (MacHardy 2005/2006: 99). The extent to which Kelowna’s landscape is a site of production – not just of apples and pears, or even of pinot auxerrois and pinot noir, but of images of rural authenticity and of the appropriate built, economic, and cultural forms to support this imaginary – is engaged in these pieces in a way that emphasizes its notable absence from other sites.

The emphasis on place-making as image-making can easily seem banal. Certainly, when Kelowna’s current OCP states that one of its objectives is to “[p]ortray a positive image of Kelowna,” with the first specific policy, labeled “Positive Image,” requiring the City “in civic communications, [to] emphasize opportunities available and work collaboratively to build infrastructure that attracts talent, provides physical activity, innovation and distinctiveness (Kelowna 2011b: 8.4), it raises the practices of neoliberal creative cities vying to construct a competitive *image* that will draw the requisite creative class. Approaching Kelowna’s urbanization as ongoing practices of aporetic “place-making” brings into focus the complicated interplay between conflicting representations of Kelowna, materializations in spatiotemporal form and embodied subjective practices, and *emplacements* within more distantiated global processes. Thus the construction of emplaced imaginaries of Kelowna occurs not just in these overtly aesthetic sites, but also in marketing and promotions, and even in modes of documentation and critical engagement. More importantly, this constructive imaginary occurs in material terms and through material productions, from the reproduction of the imaginary of leisurely British life in the construction of colonial bungalows, arts and crafts houses, and orchard estates, to the reproduction of imaginaries of the real city in the construction of Vancouver-style glass high rises downtown.

Just as crucially, however, aporetic urbanization as image production operates as much through practices of spatial and temporal *displacement*, whereby the undesired, that which does not fit within the imaginary of Kelowna, is removed from this place and time and located elsewhere, or at another time. As MacHardy notes in relation to the composition of the Oasis exhibit, the absence of works by First Nations and minority artists suggests that the construct of Kelowna as oasis or Eden was not shared by everyone who lives here (MacHardy 2005/2006: 99), which hints at the ways in which myriad complicated, all too often violent displacements have been as much a part of Kelowna's place-making as its various aestheticized material emplacements. Kelowna's contemporary "place-making" practices both invoke and displace the history and geography of Kelowna's "resettlement" (Harris 1997) as a specifically white township.

Aporetic urbanization *takes place*, and in doing so *makes place* in space and time, such that processes of place-making as modes of image-making requires being attentive to productions of the visual and the representative, the spatial and the material, and the spatiotemporalized patterns of possible, necessary, and impossible encounter.

### **Aporetic urbanization, aporetic representation, aporetic sight**

A core problem with approaching processes of aporetic urbanization through notions of representations and imaginaries – even when these are explicitly expanded to include the concrete or material, and to include spatial and temporal practices of displacement along with emplacement – is that representation itself carries the weight of an historically and conceptually complex configuration of spacetime, ontology, epistemology and phenomenology which has been foundational within the dominant logic of modern politics. This mode of representation can too easily assume a stable, objective subject with the ability to observe, to order, and to understand an external world. If aporetic urbanization can be approached via some notion of representation, then considerable work needs to be done to complicate assumptions about how one might encounter and account for a representation. How do you see urbanization as a complex of imaginaries that are continually represented and re-presented, constantly produced in material and discursive terms? What do you look at? What mode of seeing is appropriate? The logic of aporetic boundary practices raises a distinct challenge: how it is possible to

see these boundaries drawn, contested, dissolved, and reconfigured in context, when by definition an aporetic boundary does not exist “as such” (Derrida 1993), but only through its effects?

What is required, seemingly, is a mode of seeing that cannot be isolated from the boundary practices it engages; a mode of seeing that can recognize Kelowna as both an aporetic site and an aporetic process; a mode of seeing that opens possibilities for participatory or constitutive observation. Not only must we learn to see “like the city,” we must learn, or at least try on, new, aporetic modes of seeing, practices that do not assume stable configurations of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology – stable *logics* – of existing accounts of urbanization and politics, but that instead try to consider these, as much as more specific imaginaries or material constructions, as becoming possible through process of aporetic production. An aporia is marked as a practice of establishing, contesting, and redefining these logical boundaries, but it is more than that. It is the source of the distinctive pattern apparent in the way these contests, negotiations, and redefinitions are undertaken, and the distinctive patterns of their effects. Derrida is alive to the possibility of pattern: “what must be found is the point, the place in a pattern at which a word drawn from the old language will start to slide and to make the entire discourse slide’ (Derrida 2001: 333; in Lopez 2012: 55). While Derrida keeps the notion of pattern in the linguistic realm, it is possible to extend the logic of the aporetic boundary to analyze the patterns of effects of aporetic boundary practices in context. These practices are multiple, overlapping, and divergent, at times intensifying each other, at times destabilizing. As a complex of problematiques, challenges, instabilities and dynamics, aporetic boundary practices do not generate singular patterns, but series of patterns operating in the oscillating undecidability of the logical structure of possibility/necessity/impossibility.

The most singular, intentional, iconographic representation of contemporary Kelowna, the official City logo, offers an opening to thinking about patterns of effects, and the effects of patterns. The logo is a segmented circle, like an upright Ponderosa pinecone seen from a bird’s eye (God’s eye) view. When represented in colour, the segments radiate in rainbow hues, lush greens and silky, swimmable blues below, glowing sunsets of reds, oranges, and yellows above. This is Kelowna looking west, over

the lake to the evening sun. It is the imaginary of Kelowna as Oasis, reflected in and intensified by a kaleidoscopic repetition of pattern. And it offers a suggestion for how to approach Kelowna not just as a site and process of aporetic urbanization but with an observant practice of aporetic encounter. The kaleidoscope is the classic object of reflection, but this is not the only object that both clarifies and obscures sight through the play of light. Reflection is matched with refraction and diffraction as the three distinctive behaviours by which the boundaries of waves interact with entities that require their paths to bend. The boundary practices of waves, in encounters with other waves, with entities, and in the case of diffraction, with gaps, voids, and openings, suggests a method for “seeing” the peculiar spatiotemporal, epistemological, and phenomenological challenges of the interactions of aporetic boundaries.

Specifically, reflection, refraction, and diffraction are the patterns of effects generated by the different modes of interactions between the boundaries of waves and the boundaries of the entities they encounter:

Reflection occurs when there is a bouncing off of a barrier. Reflection of waves off straight barriers follows the law of reflection. Reflection of waves off parabolic barriers results in the convergence of the waves at a focal point. Refraction is the change in direction of waves that occurs when waves travel from one medium to another. Refraction is always accompanied by a wavelength and speed change. Diffraction is the bending of waves around obstacles and openings. The amount of diffraction increases with increasing wavelength.<sup>35</sup>

Further, these interactions occur at the boundaries of our various senses, and at the boundaries between the sensible and insensible: the boundaries of light waves, sound waves, water waves.<sup>36</sup> For the moment, the boundary interactions of light waves are the most applicable to the methodological problem of aporetic site/sight. The visibility of these three modes of boundary interaction are taken up briefly by Haraway (1992: 16-17; 1997), who uses them as “optical metaphors” for engaging with the problem of identity

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<sup>35</sup> <http://www.physicsclassroom.com/class/waves/u10l3b.cfm>

<sup>36</sup> The boundaries of light are particularly interesting to the methodological problems of seeing aporetically: as both a wave and a particle, both an object and a process, the challenges of thinking about light provides insight into the epistemological problem of how the subjective practices and experiences of the researcher interacts with the objects of research, and thus with how claims of phenomenology interact with the spacing and temporalizing practices of aporetic logic (Galetti 2010).

and difference. More recently, they have been developed by Lynes (2012) as a means of articulating artistic practices and visual methods in film and video that can engage and provoke global anti-colonial feminist possibilities. However, thinking of these interactions specifically in the context of the complexities and instabilities of aporetic boundaries and their patterns of effects enables a more precise development of these three terms as metaphors and analytical prompts: the focus on boundary interactions enables them to be distinguished more clearly from each other, the different logics of their patterns identified, and the political implications of these patterns engaged.

In reflection, waves of light encounter the boundaries of another object and change course within established laws of the angle of intersection and subsequent reflection. The more perfectly impermeable the boundaries of the entity encountered, the more perfectly the waves are returned, with minimal alteration in the wave's length or course. The mirror is the paradigmatic object of reflection, returning one's image back to oneself with apparently minimal distortion. Although the process and metaphor of reflection underpins the move towards "reflexivity" as a mode of critical engagement – critical because it entails a self-consciousness about one's own perspective on what is studied – reflection is critiqued by both Lynes and Haraway as leaving crucial assumptions about the constitution of boundaries unexamined. The kaleidoscope, as a technology for multiplying mirror images, offers a complicating possibility to the practices of reflection, as it highlights the intensifications, mutations, and confusions of what is observed via processes of reflection: the same object is placed in focus, but myriad possibilities of observations are generated, based on shifting, multiplied reflections. Thus reflection may simply be a matter of "the same displaced," as Haraway (1992: n.p.) notes, but these patterns of displacement are still valuable for understanding how aporetic boundaries are replicated and made to appear all-encompassing despite their inherent limit instabilities.

In refraction, the waves of light change as they cross the boundary from one medium to another, and the interactions of the boundaries of light with the boundaries of the medium entered or transferred through cause the waves to change in momentum, in direction, and in appearance. The prism is the paradigmatic object of refraction: the apparently singular beam of white light enters the prism, refracts on entry and exit, and

displays the constitutive complexity of the full spectrum of visible colours as well as those not visible to unaided human eye. Each colour has a different wavelength, which causes different interactions with the boundaries of the prism, as each wave changes course at a different angle. While reflection and reflexivity maintain the perspective of a unified, comprehensible subject or object in space and time, refraction (and diffraction to come) acts as a mode of displacement that disrupts claims of subject and object, and the relationship between them, such that “prismatic strategies must ... be firmly located within a complex politics of location” (Lynes 2012: 20). As Lynes (2012: 16) argues, “prismatic media” and their refracted “images come to stand for the historically-specific and -informed work of encounter across cultural, economic, political and geographic boundaries.” Therefore, “...refraction signals the displacement of the evidentiary” (Lynes 2012: 15) and highlights that unsettling these foundational boundaries must necessarily proceed through destabilizing the epistemological and phenomenological claims of modern sovereign politics.

Finally, in diffraction, waves of light disperse or interweave depending on how they travel through a slit or gap in another object; diffraction makes visible the interactions of the boundaries of waves with the boundaries of the void that alters them as they pass. Haraway (1992: n.p.; emphasis added) suggests that “diffraction is a mapping of interference, not of replication, reflection, or reproduction. A diffraction pattern does not map where differences appear, but rather maps where the *effects* of difference appear.” Haraway’s focus on the problem of identity and difference is not quite the same as the focus of this paper, but translating from the language of difference to the analysis of aporetic boundaries, insofar as an aporetic boundary is not an “as such” but a set of practices, not an object but a void where something solid is only ever claimed through contested practices, diffraction maps the effects of the aporetic void, and thus clarifies the shape of the void from the derived patterns. When thinking of aporetic boundary practices as the production of patterns, the concern is not just a distinction between same and difference, but with the dynamic whereby the claims and hopes of difference as an unsettling of the same continue to interact through the same boundary practices and repeatedly reproduce familiar patterns and reimpose familiar effects. Diffraction, as a focus on interference in established patterns and the production of new patterns of

interference, is helpful, but the specific patterns produced by reflection and refraction are also crucial to understand how unstable aporetic boundaries are stabilized and given the appearance of security and necessity. The focus on all three forms of patterns is necessary to rethink aporetic boundary sites and aporetic boundary sights.

When thought in terms of light waves, the kaleidoscope is the classic object of reflection, as reflected by Kelowna's logo; the prism is the classic object of refraction, projecting rainbows where none could be seen; and the gap or slit is the classic (non-) object of diffraction, announcing its presence through its effect on the waves that pass by. In Kelowna's OCP there is a mere hint, whispered and then retracted, of the possibilities of thinking and seeing kaleidoscopically: the logo for Kelowna is overlaid onto images of the city, both looking south over the entire city from Knox Mountain, and looking south west, over the mill and across the bridge. It raises the question of how viewing Kelowna as a kaleidoscope may highlight and intensify patterns of boundary production and interaction that are usually more obscure. As such, it is evocative of the temporal and spatial emplacements and displacements that occur through aporetic urbanization. It supplies a vision of Kelowna already replaced by something else, an attempt to construct a more definitive version of 'the city.' However, reflection, refraction, and diffraction manifest in sound waves and water waves, as well as light waves. This suggests that to prioritize sight might be misleading, when what is sought is patterns of interaction, influence, conflict and support. These patterns might manifest in visual terms. However, an aporetic analysis is an "...examination of modes of looking bound by the very prohibitions of visibility and invisibility" (Lynes 2012: 27). As a theorization of the limit experience (Derrida 1993), an aporetic analysis must also be an encounter with the *limits* of the visible and the visual. As it unsettles the boundaries of modern Western epistemology and phenomenology, it must also raise questions about the dominance of sight, of visuality, and of representation. Indirectly, as if passing through a void and generating a pattern of interference that disrupts vision, it acts as a reminder of other senses and sensibilities, other ways of knowing and encountering. Thus, these patterns of behaviour may manifest in more auditory terms. When thought in terms of sound waves, the possibilities shift, to modes of amplification and attenuation of sounds or voices, as waves align to strengthen or weaken each other. Or, it may be more suggestive to think in

different sensory modes, such as waves of water interacting with each other and with their surroundings, recalling the way a body both sways with and braces against an oncoming wave in the lake.

Thinking of the reflections, refractions, and diffractions of imaginaries and representations of imaginaries as a means of “seeing” aporetic boundary practices of urbanization opens the possibility of re-approaching the standard narratives of Kelowna’s urbanization. It enacts a hiatus in the forward momentum of these developmental narratives, creating space and time to engage their complexities, their inconsistencies, and their gaps. The narratives of Kelowna that result can no longer be understood as easy eye-witness accounts of actual objective conditions. And, while they are intensely personal, they must disrupt any sense of phenomenological encounters that can result in a subjective truth of the condition of Kelowna. To look at the emplacements and displacements of urbanization in aporetic terms requires taking seriously the boundary practices that constitute the terms of comprehensibility for urbanization. The political implications of this approach can only be worked out in place, in practice, such that it becomes necessary to continue as I have started: through Kelowna. Yet these same boundary practices both affect and effect the visibility of Kelowna and the methods and techniques for engaging it. In other words, it is necessary to develop a method that not only takes aporetic boundaries as its object, but that can function according to the logic of aporetic boundaries. The following essay, the last in this work, engages these challenges.

## ESSAY FOUR: Encountering the Political Logic of Aporetic Boundaries in Kelowna

The discussions that comprise this essay will focus on material objects in the landscape and cityscape of Kelowna and on textual productions of Kelowna as a site of landscape and cityscape. Not only are these representations generated from and responding to historically and geographically distanced processes (Massey 2006, Amin and Thrift 2002); they are variable representations of Kelowna as a site of urbanization, sometimes working as amplifications of each, and at other times as attenuations. These trans-discursive (Shield 1996) representations are often central to claims about Kelowna's urbanization, participating in the dominant narratives of a transition from Kelowna's rural, white idyllic past, to its dynamic present as an urbanizing regional centre, to its claimed immanent future as a diverse world-class mid-sized city. The focus is primarily on Kelowna's Official Community Plan (Kelowna 2011b), as its primary urban planning document and thus its centralizing vision of an urban future, and on three models of development that articulate three variations on this vision: the sustainable suburb, the revitalized downtown core, and the intentional community. I approach these documents and processes not as planning statements, per se, but as representations of imaginaries that demonstrate how the aporetic logic functions in process. These representations of Kelowna constitute its repeated narratives of urbanization, but also continually disrupt these narratives and metanarratives of transition by mobilizing imaginaries that are at the heart of modern (liberal) politics. In an effort to bring the aporetic logic of possibility, necessity, and impossibility into focus, I also pose more specifically aesthetic encounters with the same sets of claims, concerns, and boundaries, using public art processes and productions in Kelowna, specifically, the Bernard Avenue Revitalization project (Moore 2013; Smith 2013; Waters 2013; KNC 2014) and the conceptual art piece *Ten Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)*, created by Swintak in the summer of 2012 (Alternator 2012; Stanford 2012). These aesthetic sites help me pause in the hiatus of the aporetic logic long enough to consider how dynamics of openings and closures might proceed otherwise. The reflections, refractions, and diffractions brought into focus are effects within and between claims about space/time,

forms, and practices, and encounters of urbanization, but also, fundamentally, within and between claims about the spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of politics. Therefore, even as it becomes possible to construct an aporetic account of politics, through an account of aporetic urbanization in Kelowna, it remains impossible to present this account as a statement, which can remain stable across time and space, regarding what politics is, how it can known, and how it is engaged and experienced.

## **Spacetime**

### **Centring and decentring the OCP**

The Official Community Plan has been the primary official tool for centralizing and guiding processes of and debates about urbanization in Kelowna for over fifteen years. As seen in Essay Two, the current OCP was the outcome of a prolonged consultation and drafting period. It defines the City's formal vision of sustainable urbanization and outlines the strategies and policy tools that the city will use over the next 20 years to approach this vision. Yet it is equally visible from that essay that to consider the OCP as a statement that captures and reflects the complex and diverse processes of and debates over 'urbanization' in Kelowna, and particularly the uncertainty over *urbanization* itself, is to miss much of what is necessary to engage. So what can be seen by placing the OCP temporarily at the centre of an account of the urbanization of Kelowna?

The current version of the OCP exists solely as an electronic document: the City does not produce public printed copies because of the frequency of revisions. So it is encountered through the backlit computer screen, making it appear not just a glossy depiction of Kelowna and its surrounding landscape, but a truly *glowing* vision of the City. The kaleidoscopic use of the city logo overlaid on the panoramic visions of the city and southward views, as discussed in the previous essay, appear in the second and third page, framing the material to come. After an introduction that discusses the overarching community vision, the sustainable city goal, the role of the Official Community Plan,

strategies for greenhouse gas reductions and other sustainability priorities, and opening sections that discuss regional context and growth projections, the document lays out policies and priorities for the following concerns: Future Land Use; Development Process; Environment; Infrastructure; Economic Development; Arts, Culture and Heritage; Social Sustainability; Development Permit Areas; Natural Environment Development Permit Guidelines; Hazardous Condition Development Permit Guidelines; Urban Design Development Permit Guidelines; Farm Protection Development Permit Guidelines; and Heritage Conservation Area Guidelines. These sections work through more technical foundations of Kelowna's city planning, such as zoning designations and rationale, land use and transportation planning, planned urban growth centres, and boundaries of the urban growth limit. They also engage more immediately accessible topics such as urban landscaping, cultural and heritage planning, and parks locations.

However, readers are reminded, at the very outset, that

[t]ext in this document that provides background information, introductions and other explanatory text or photographs are not intended to be interpreted as policy. Only the population and land use projections, future land use designations, objectives and related policy statements within each section of the OCP Bylaw, as well as Development Permit (DP) Guidelines are intended as land use and development policy direction (Kelowna 2011b: 2).

Thus, by its own admission, the OCP offers representations and creates impressions that exceed its formal policy authority. Indeed, the text within the document is minimal, while imagistic representations of Kelowna dominate. Full page, vibrant, aspirational photos proliferate, offering a particular vision of a City and a community that *cares*: the houses shown are well appointed and well maintained; city streets are clean and wide; farms and gardens flourish, despite the desert climate; residents are shown engaged in multiple leisure activities – biking, walking, running, tarrying in gorgeously lit sunscapes. This picture of Kelowna is the picture that drives amenity migration, designed to generate feelings of pride, if you live here, or feelings of desire, if you do not. Yet the repetitious quality of these images also create voids: the dilapidated bungalows and mobile home parks that are disappearing to sustain this development vision are lacking here, as are representations of people who may wish to remain in these homes; a diversity of residents

is absent, whether of minority communities or the Indigenous Sylix. The emphasis is on calm, steady, and reliable growth, a trustworthy community, perhaps. For all its *glow*, it is a remarkably *flat* document, eliding the multiple dimensions, debates, and contentions that make Kelowna a place rather than a product.

So much, and so little, is visible when approaching the OCP as a statement of past, present, and future Kelowna. Yet when brought into focus as a site of aporetic boundary productions, the OCP poses the problem of urbanization as a problem of securing urban community in place and over time. It offers a vision of forms of urban development and forms of urban community that the city hopes to instantiate, while offering a parallel vision of the city as the most appropriate and capable authority to achieve these visions. As such, it can be read as an aporetic production: it aims to define the appropriate, *authentic* identity of the community, but its intense focus on the *sustainability* of this vision only serves to highlight the uncertain determinations and reconciliations that it produces and reproduces. The OCP is a centring claim within the voids and indeterminacies produced by urbanization, and centring the OCP at this point in my encounter with Kelowna is an intentional strategy of seeing certain aporetic boundaries at work, as suggested by the image in the opening pages of the OCP of the kaleidoscopic pattern of Kelowna's pine cone logo layered over the city. The kaleidoscope generates reflections upon reflections upon reflections; it is a pattern that both centres and decentres, emphasizing what is held in focus while raising questions about its limitations, exclusions, and silences. Further, this encounter with the OCP keeps focus not just on its reflections but on its refractions – its multiplications out of apparent unity; its changes in speed and direction – and on its diffractions – the intensifications and disruptions produced by reading the OCP not as a centre of urbanization policy and community vision but as an aporetic void. The OCP offers an introduction to the peculiar spatio-temporality of the aporetic logic: the forward momentum provided by a boundary determination, the seeming failure of the determination that produces a return to a condition of instability, and the pause that is lost when the next determination is produced. Yet simultaneously, the aporetic spatiotemporality seen through the OCP suggests that there is no easy linear temporality or discrete spatiality between observer and observed, such that it raises the necessity to pursue the deep ontological,

epistemological, and phenomenological claims and problems at play (problems that will be brought into systematic focus to be reflected, refracted, and diffracted in the other sections of this essay).

The OCP repeats the narrative, elaborated in the previous two essays, that Kelowna is in the middle of a period of rapid urbanization that is transforming the city and transforming the way the city must plan for and respond to growth and change. It also repeats the claim that the OCP is the appropriate tool for managing this growth and centralizing the design of a form of urban future that can instantiate its potentials while mitigating its risks: that the OCP is properly “[a]n attempt to get consensus on how future developments are shaped, while addressing the city’s upcoming needs” (Michaels 2011a: n.p.). This role in centralizing and managing urbanization as transformation “prompted city planners to craft an Official Community Plan with a more urban bent than in past years” (Michaels 2011a: n.p.). The OCP is a self-limiting document, in the sense that it is bound by provincial legislation to addressing the issues of urbanization through the legally and conceptually limited tools of land use, zoning, and transportation. The OCP argues for its own centrality, despite its limitations, on the basis that “[I]and use greatly impacts how a city looks, feels and operates” (Kelowna 2011b: 4.1), and thus it works against contemporary scholarly efforts to deterritorialize the urban in favour of analyses of processes and flows.

As the primary document used by the City of Kelowna not merely to manage its urban growth but to assert its authority over the processes of designing and directing urban transformations, the OCP would reasonably be expected to contain some statement, if not analysis, of the forces of urbanization with which the visions, strategies, and policies of the OCP have to contend. Yet the final OCP documents, as well as the range of planning and presentation documents that were part of the public consultation period, present remarkably little perspective on what is driving growth, either in specifically local terms or in the broader context of claims about global urbanization. It is noted, almost as an aside, that continued growth in the residential housing market will depend in part on “Alberta oil money” (Kelowna 2011b: 3.3), yet the ways in which this embeds Kelowna not just in interprovincial migrations but also in global resource markets is not elaborated. Similarly, the plan specifically divides anticipated residential housing needs

from anticipated holiday and temporary housing needs, as a way of holding distinct two different future growth scenarios, yet the conditions of possibility for and the consequences of these divergent futures are not discussed. Precisely where one might expect an Official Community Plan to provide an official, if succinct, interpretation of what influences the processes and possibilities of urbanization, one finds instead a silence. When the OCP is placed in the centre of focus, what is made visible is one of the ways that urbanization in Kelowna follows an aporetic logic: urbanization itself is the silence that cannot be directly discussed, the void that cannot be directly engaged. Its effects are felt and are supposed to be subject to management, yet without any ability to say what it is, why it is happening, or how it connects urbanization in Kelowna to the urbanizing world within and beyond. So, what does the OCP do in relation to this gap? What do can be seen as a result of manoeuvring around this gap?

### **The spatiotemporal indeterminacy of urbanization**

#### *Transition narratives and boundary practices*

The OCP offers to insert itself into, and guide residents of Kelowna through, the challenges of the transitions experienced as a result of urbanization processes. The primary transition narrative of modern urbanization, that of the transformation of rural into urban, is modulated in Kelowna, as “[a]griculture is a prominent land use in Kelowna and a vital component of the local economy” (Kelowna 2011b: 15.2). The challenge, then, is not simply managing the transition from rural to urban, but of transitioning agricultural land and labour from a rural to an urban venture, while minimizing conflicts with other, potentially incompatible, urban land uses and practices:

As growth continues in the City, the potential for land use conflicts within and adjacent to agricultural areas increases, necessitating the application of guidelines with respect to subdivision design, site layout, landscaping, and buffering....: protect farm land and farm operations; minimize the impact of urban encroachment and land use conflicts on agricultural land; minimize conflicts created by activities designated as farm use by ALC regulation and non-farm uses within agricultural areas (Kelowna 2011b: 15.2).

The OCP's farm protection guidelines operate to make the boundaries between farm and non-farm land explicit. The purpose is not simply to reduce conflict but to use mechanisms such as "statutory covenants on non-agricultural land at subdivision to notify landowners that 'normal farm practices' occur in close proximity" (Kelowna 2011b: 15.4), and thus to make an increasingly "urban" population aware of the smells, sounds, and speed of agricultural life. Yet in the context of the entire OCP, this emphasis on protecting active agricultural work in Kelowna is figured in terms of the agricultural past and imminent urban futures, and thus in terms of tradition and heritage, on the one hand, and in terms of progressive innovations on the other.

Kelowna's OCP also modulates the cognate boundaries of urbanization that have defined the modern transition narrative. The transition from rural to urban is cast as the transition from the natural state of Kelowna's environment to a state of increasing cultural interventions and productions that threaten this natural state and must therefore be adjusted to protect it. This comes across strongly in the justification for the OCP to attend to the "environment" on the grounds that

[t]he natural environment and biological diversity (biodiversity) is well known to convey widespread social, cultural and intrinsic values known as ecological goods and services for residents and visitors. That same biodiversity and ecological landscape which provides for our basic needs is *under imminent threat from various human forces including but not limited to rapid urbanization, agricultural expansion, and wildfire mitigation* (Kelowna 2011b: 6.1; emphasis added).

The legislative limits placed on the OCP mean that strategies and policies for engaging with threats to the "environment" are narrow, focusing attention on expanding urban forests, xeriscaping city gardens, developing a compensation fund for environmental damage, developing specific guidelines for appropriate building on hillside sites, and encouraging reduced greenhouse gas emissions. The emphasis on the dynamic *culture* of urbanization, which threatens the *natural* environment of the city, is also used to naturalize Kelowna's urban development in problematic and contradictory ways. The OCP extends the notion of a city embedded in its "natural" environment to the city that develops its own "social" environment, echoing the naturalistic and evolutionary approaches to urbanization made popular by the Chicago School (see Essay One):

urban planning and development has long been focused on a community's physical infrastructure – roads, sewers, utilities and parks. But a community is much more than its built form and natural setting. *A community is as much a social environment as a physical environment*, and to be successful, communities must be socially sustainable (Kelowna 2011b: 10.1; emphasis added).

The OCP therefore calls on the city to protect and enhance its social environment through strategies such as available and affordable housing, access to parks, active transportation, and “cultural service delivery in all areas of the city, *particularly the downtown and other Urban Centres*” (Kelowna 2011b: 9.2; emphasis added), because culture remains, fundamentally, an urban practice.

Qualities such as landscape and environment, social sustainability, and cultural vitality have been increasingly captured and reconfigured by the creative cities urbanization narrative (see Essay Two). Echoing and amplifying the dominant narrative about contemporary urbanization as a competitive process of transforming into a creative city that can bring the right kind of population and economic growth, the OCP claims that

[c]ulture plays a significant role in economic development since the creative economy is one of the key elements of a dynamic business environment. Cities can only thrive if they are able to attract a diversity of people. Cultural amenities can help attract people of all ages, educational backgrounds, ethnicities and walks of life to live in Kelowna – the achievement of which will be key to Kelowna's economic future (Kelowna 2011b: 9.1).

The City of Kelowna therefore represents itself as an “anti-racist community” (Kelowna 2013: 78) that uses its policy and planning authority to be more inclusive of visible minorities (Kelowna 2011c: 1). This narrative of the necessary alignment of urbanization and diversification naturalizes processes of change within Kelowna, both in the sense that urbanization is thought to naturally lead to a more diverse population and in the sense that urban planning and policy will naturally seek to amplify this diversification process. However, it also enables the City to use its delimited political authority to excise crucial anti-racist components from its Social Policy 360, claiming that these interventions are not what “cities” do (Kelowna 2013: 78-79), that it is not in the political nature of cities to intervene in and manage such social or cultural developments. Thus where nature and culture, in their binary construction, are typically seen as a simple parallel with claims

about whiteness and homogeneity, on the one hand, and non-white others and heterogeneity, on the other, the OCP demonstrates the variable alignments and misalignments that are generated by the urbanization narrative in Kelowna. The imaginary of white Kelowna constitutes itself through appeals to rural, pioneer heritage (a move that requires effacing both Indigenous Syilx peoples and the consistent presence of non-white settler populations), and simultaneously figures itself as the form of civil urban community necessary to protect Kelowna from the excesses of rampant urban growth.

In the context of claims about the global reach of urbanization in contemporary times, it seems surprising that the OCP retains such a resolutely local focus. Yet this focus appears multiply over-determined: not only is the OCP restricted, in administrative and legislative terms, to intervening in the urbanization of Kelowna through limited mechanisms (land use, zoning, and transportation), but it is limited by the legal spatial boundaries of the City itself. The geographic limits of the OCP narrow the possible responses to those strategies and policies that can be implemented on a purely local basis, a spatial limitation amplified by the designation of an urban growth boundary within the City boundary. This limitation becomes particularly clear through the maps of the OCP, where regardless of the concern – from transport routes to wild fire hazard zones, from population densities to heritage sites – the information stops at the City Boundary, as though the world beyond this line is simply void. And yet the OCP also displays a tension between welcoming in some elements of global urbanization and attempting to hold other elements at bay. Many of its social and economic development strategies are focused on attracting investments, labour, and various forms of diversity. Even still, this welcoming in also generates the constant pressure to protect local heritage, traditions, and values. Serious threats are also generated from the internal character of Kelowna's natural and social "environment" (interface wildfires, flood plains, and unstable hillsides; conflicts over land use, social values, and cultural practices and expectations), making security over time dependent on welcoming in expertise and resources from outside the city boundaries. Therefore, Kelowna's OCP constitutes the city both as an isolated, singular place within its geopolitical borders *and* a distantiated (Amin and Thrift 2002) place-beyond-place (Massey 2006), while also suggesting that it is not possible to determine

which of these conflicting configurations is positive and which negative, which dominant and which subordinate.

Urbanization, in this imaginary, is an uncertain and contradictory set of forces, driving Kelowna into the future and further into the past, increasing its embeddedness in the world while drawing ever-stronger boundaries between it and the world. It requires all sorts of vigilance, protection, and management of the boundaries that continue to define urbanization in Kelowna (rural and urban, nature and culture, tradition and modernity), as well as the boundaries that define the location or ‘place’ of Kelowna in the world (local and global, homogeneity and diversity). The OCP claims to centre debates over urbanization in Kelowna and keep it a secure community despite its transformations. As it centres each set of operative boundaries in turn, from section to section, the role of each in managing urbanization seems clear: each is a site of conflict, perhaps, but its role in ensuring the sustainability of Kelowna over time uncontested. Together, they are supposed to create the image of a unified, operative, effective plan for managing and maintaining the boundaries that enable Kelowna to remain *Kelowna* while still undergoing transformative processes of urbanization. The OCP, as its use of the pinecone logo over the city suggests, offers a truly kaleidoscopic vision of Kelowna, shifting the patterns of urbanization from site to site, boundary to boundary, while keeping crucial elements of the process out of frame entirely. The central fact that the OCP is designed to guide growth and development of Kelowna for the next 30 years, but is rewritten every 5 years, suggests just how impossible it is to manage and secure these boundaries in space and over time. When read closely, the conflicts between these various boundary delineations become more apparent, displaying reversals and contradictions, over-determinations and under-determinations. At its centre, then, the OCP makes clear the extent to which urbanization continually threatens to make Kelowna indeterminable, and thus the extent to which urbanization in Kelowna operates according to an aporetic logic.

#### *The spatiotemporality of aporetic logic*

For now, the OCP brings into focus one of the distinctive characteristics of the aporetic logic of urbanization, namely, that it operates according to a consistent spatiotemporal dynamic. An aporetic boundary is brought to life through specific spatiotemporal practices, takes on a specific spatiotemporal configuration, and has

specific spatiotemporal effects. In the Derridean account, the aporia takes shape as a boundary, a limit, or a border: a delimitation that marks one space apart from and distinct from another. Similarly, in the Foucauldian analysis (2002: 371), the aporetic boundary is the site of a “hiatus,” a space between that operates in conceptual, discursive, and fundamentally epistemic registers. The aporia, according to Foucault, creates a space that cannot be collapsed into unity, universality, wholeness, or sameness, and that cannot be traversed, as between the two poles in a dialectical relation. An aporetic boundary also has a specific temporality, a distinctive movement, and a unique momentum: it is a practice in time as well as a configuration of space. Derrida describes the aporia using the language of the passage, which is necessarily the nonpassage (as the limit is impassible) and the traverse, which is necessarily undertaken and inherently blocked (1993: 13). It is a practice of folding and unfolding borders, of inverting and reverting, combining and separating. Therefore the hiatus, which Foucault describes purely in spatial terms, is also a temporal figure, denoting a pause, a resting or remaining still within a flow of movement. This hiatus as pause resonates with the Derridean nonpassage, the pause at the encounter with the limit condition. This spatiotemporal hiatus is simultaneously a temporary condition and permanent feature of aporetic boundaries.

The act of delimiting an aporetic boundary is both spatial and temporal: it constructs a temporary space that holds entities apart and creates a temporary pause before the doubled dynamic of desire for reconciliation and fear of insecurity take hold. This general movement of an aporetic boundary is frequently noted as following a particular “logic,”<sup>37</sup> though Derrida is clear that the logic of an aporetic boundary is not simply an *a priori* conceptual formalism that exists ‘as such,’ independently in the world. And, while an aporetic boundary may operate through discursive practice, it is not simply a linguistic effect, a problem of the slipperiness of words that could be resolved with a more precise language (1993: 72). Rather, the logic of aporetic boundaries is identified through a structured pattern of generative and degenerative momentum (Tedesco 2012 and forthcoming, Elliott 2013, Galetti 2010). Thus, the spatiotemporal dynamic of the aporetic logic creates a movement distinct from positivist or empirical “progress,” but

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<sup>37</sup> For more on the complexity of the use of the term logic in relation to the aporia, see particularly Galetti 2010.

also distinct from logics of dialectics or assemblages. The distinctive spatiotemporal configuration of an aporia is an open space-time that generates new forms of relations but also new forms of idealized finality in a drive to closure that can never be successful, thus returning us to other openings. At every turn, boundaries appear over-determined, but their inherent, ongoing instability – their actual confusion and deterioration, or their perceived vulnerability – suggests that they are simultaneously, continuously, under-determined and always at risk of destabilization.

This dynamic hints at the spatiotemporal complexity of urbanization. The movements and momentum of aporetic urbanization are not bound to Euclidean singular space and linear time; rather, the hiatus opens the possibility that the emplacement of one boundary practice need not entail the displacement of another practice, that multiple configurations of time and space can be *co-operative*, in the sense that they produce simultaneous effects. Distinct from claims of urbanization as spatiotemporal *distantiation* (Amin and Thrift 2002) or even *disjunctions* of discrete paths through time and space, the aporetic logic produces both concurrent emplacements and concurrent displacements of determinative boundaries of spaces and times, and produces these boundaries as continually under threat and requiring security or reformulation. Yet, while co-operative, these concurrent emplacements and displacements do not exist ‘as such:’ they do not co-exist in a simple sense of multiple objects residing together in the same space. And thus the relations between these multi-spatial and multi-temporal boundary practices cannot be relayed in abstraction, but must necessarily be approached through a consideration of the effects of these claims and voids.

#### *Community boundaries as spatiotemporal productions*

This account of the OCP offers both a spatialized history of Kelowna (the different zones that demarcate appropriately rural and urban land uses over time past) that must be continually emplaced in the present, and a temporalized space (the different locations within the City boundaries that each have distinct relationships to the past and distinct speeds of transformation) within which Kelowna must continually, if differentially, emplace its urban dreams. Yet the OCP also confirms that linear transition narratives of urbanization are too simplistic: it figures the challenge that urbanization poses to Kelowna not as the need to transition beyond its rural, settler-colonial

beginnings but as the need to keep this rural heritage present in space and time. Further, the more “urban bent” of the current OCP focuses on integrating incoming populations through residential densification, but “[t]he issue of multi-family housing lends itself to discussions on high rises, which has been a thorn in the side of failed developments in the past, most notably the ill-fated CD-21 zone” (Michaels 2011a: n.p.). The shift in debates over productions of appropriate urban space, from contestations over urban sprawl into agricultural lands and undeveloped hillsides to contestations over heights of new residential high rises in the OCP-designated urban centres, marks a re-orientation of the spatializations of Kelowna’s urbanization, from a horizontal to a vertical axis. In both dimensions, the OCP places peculiar emphasis on creating an urban built form that captures an authentically “Okanagan” aesthetic (Kelowna 2011b: 14.3) – typically grounded in the use of materials and structures that reflect aspects of Kelowna’s landscape and (settler) heritage, such as wooden beams (reflections of the Kettle Valley Railway), trellises (reflections of the agricultural techniques), and integrations of earth-tones and glass (reflections of the mix of desert landscape and the series of lakes that make up the Okanagan Valley). In other words, the spatial reorientation from horizontal to vertical does not escape the need to continually make present a particular version of Kelowna’s rural past. The label of this section of the OCP, “Authenticity and Regional Expression,” makes explicit the links between this spatiotemporal project and the stakes of ‘authenticity’ for claims to secure (political) community.

Further, the intense commitment to a linear, progressive temporal vision of Kelowna’s urbanization, where the authentic rural past becomes the foundation for an authentic and sustainable urban present, helps to explain why “...the issue [of vertical developments] is just as galvanizing today as it has been in the past. ‘It’s an issue people seem to care deeply about,’ said [Singe] Bange [the city’s policy and planning director]” (Michaels 2011a: n.p.). Ongoing efforts to materialize this temporal narrative of the spatial transformation of Kelowna emphasize different *speeds* as indicative of urban status (the slow, bucolic, stable rural past as compared with the rapidly changing and unreliably changeable urban present), and these characterizations are both unsettled and affirmed by the prevalent narrative that the lack of change in the downtown core has been the primary impediment to recognizing Kelowna as a proper urban centre. As with the

spatial complications, therefore, the temporalities produced by these narrative practices are at odds with the temporality claimed by them, and constitute urbanization not as a linear transition narrative but as the production of ever-more-complicated gestures forward to the future and backward into the past, creating multi-spatial and multi-temporal patterns that are at some times convergent and others divergent.

Through its focus on both the spatiality of Kelowna and the temporality of its transformations and repetitions, the OCP continually refracts debates around Kelowna, and similar debates occurring in different registers and locations, about the city as a place versus the urban and urbanization as a process. The patterns that emerge through the OCP suggest that these are not unitary positions existing in opposition, but complex interactions between amplifications and attenuations, declarations and disruptions. The OCP works, hard, to produce a specific set of material and concrete constructions within the delineated geographic boundaries of ‘the city,’ and thus also to produce an imaginary of the authority to make determinations about this ‘city’ as a specific place. But it works just as hard to produce a specific speed, momentum, and direction of transformation of Kelowna: not singularly *forward*, but intent on demonstrating the possibility and necessity of controlling the relations of past, present, and future within the space of Kelowna in order to produce a secure and authentic community identity within and despite dynamics of change. In other words, the aporetic logic enables and entails maintaining focus on urbanization as both place and movement: the effects of each spatiotemporal claim are felt in what residents often find the frustrating pattern of progress toward a globally-circulating vision of world-class city status and retreat to a locally-affirmed vision of the right sort of “desirable” city (Bennett 1998: 75).

The momentum captured by the OCP is not simply that of shifts in place, space, and geography over time, whereby growth, development, intensification, or densification has produced Kelowna as less rural and more urban; as, finally, a real or immanent city. Rather, the converging and diverging forces of growth and change have produced continual patterns of return to defining and redefining the same *conceptual* boundaries – rural and urban, nature and culture, and so on – in spatial and temporal terms, and patterns of continually using these spatial and temporal boundaries to articulate the limits of community and the authenticity of identity. The spatiotemporal determinations and

resolutions of these contested boundaries represent a collapse of the complexity of the contestations over forms, categories, and practices of urbanization to purely spatiotemporal terms: a compression, reduction, and simplification that is continually threatened, as the permanent insecurity of the spatiotemporal boundaries of the OCP demonstrates. This insecurity is the moment of the hiatus within the seemingly over-determined movements, flows, transformations, and determinations of urbanization, and it produces a diffraction of the primary focus on sustainability that runs throughout the OCP process and document. It is valuable to pause at this hiatus, not in order to locate a secure place within these flows and changes, but rather to linger in the encounter with an enplaced aporetic void and witness, obliquely, its indeterminate political productions.

### **The spatiotemporal indeterminacy of politics**

#### *OCP, sustainable city, and political boundaries*

Urbanization, as the spatiotemporal production and transformation of places bound within and distinguished from a world of other places, creates a dynamic of change that leads to a dual experience of possibility and threat that has echoes in formulations as distinct as “creative destruction” (Brenner 2013: 94) and “city of hope/city of fear” (Bauman 2003). As urbanization has been experienced as both moving faster and becoming total, *planetary*, these hopes and fears have been amplified. The emphasis within the OCP on sustainability seems a simple reflection of how these hopes and fears manifest within Kelowna. According to the OCP process, residents “expressed a strong desire to make the city more sustainable. When asked in an on-line survey, ‘Do you think that City Hall should do more to ensure that future development is sustainable?’ 92% of respondents said ‘yes’” (Kelowna 2011b: 1.1). The oft-repeated city definition of sustainability holds the central responsibility of the city as “[p]roviding services and infrastructure to our community in a way that improves the capacity of *future generations and other species, people and places* to meet their own needs” (Kelowna 2008c: 4; emphasis added). This frames urbanization as a problem across boundaries of space (our community/other people and places) and of time (current services and infrastructure/needs of future generations), while also hinting at how

spatiotemporal boundary practices participate in locating the boundary between human and non-human nature.

The goal of sustainability policies is not simply to maintain but to *improve* quality of life, and thus is familiarly aspirational and progressive. At the same time, sustainability measures aim as much to attain a form of variable equilibrium as they do to ensure a forward propulsion: as the OCP claims, “[a] sustainable city is designed to create *the best balance* between environmental protection, economic growth, social development and cultural vibrancy” (Kelowna 2011b: 1.1-2; emphasis added). The visions of a progressive movement, necessary to successful urbanization, exist in tension with the continual revision and inclusion of configurations of ‘the past,’ necessary as a vital link to the desire for community identity. Both spatiotemporal configurations – progress and return – are constructed as necessary, and insofar as both are incorporated into sustainability visions and OCP policy, both are constructed as possible. The OCP attempts to fill the gap between claims about the continual forward momentum of urbanization and visions of fidelity to heritage, of maintaining its past and present into its sustainable future. However, in needing to “realize the community’s vision for a sustainable community while keeping the best of what already exists, such as our waterfront, parklands and water quality” (Kelowna 2011b: 1.2), the OCP subjects urban policy and planning to an impossible pressure, and thus heightens the stakes of real or perceived failures. Sustainability is thus figured here as an aporetic problem, requiring spatiotemporal consistency, stability, and predictability while ensuring the impossibility of this configuration.

The spatiotemporal instability of the aporetic logic suggests that sustainability policies and practices can neither operate through or nor result in either simple linear progress or stable, reliable balance. Instead, the condition of impossibility injects an inescapable instability into the desire for sustainable urbanization. Thus the OCP does not simply attempt to define and limit the complexities of urbanization to a range of spatialized and temporalized boundary determinations; rather, the spatiotemporal logic of the aporia, and the insecurity it engenders, is perceived as a further problem of urbanization that requires a further solution. This solution gets figured as an act of

authority. The OCP claims that its limited policy tools can address this insecurity, but also suggests that they contribute to the insecurity:

[u]rban planning and development has long been focused on a community's physical infrastructure – roads, sewers, utilities and parks. But a community is much more than its built form and natural setting. A community is as much a social environment as a physical environment, and to be successful, communities must be socially sustainable (Kelowna 2011b: 10.1)

In other words, because the social community is located in a built community, land use, zoning, and transportation will have significant impact on stabilizing the community. The OCP embodies common assumptions about the capacity for local planning authorities to change or effect what are increasingly considered to be global processes. Through its statement about the jurisdiction of municipal government – planning, transportation, and land use – and its proposition that these are crucial to the social as well as physical environment of the community, the OCP functions as a claim about the spatiotemporal character of the problems of urbanization and the authority invested or held within “the community” to define and redefine boundaries in spatiotemporal terms.

However, because the social community cannot be reduced to the built community, as the OCP acknowledges, it opens a further gap between the problems of urbanization it identifies and its own authority to address these insecurities, and so diffracts multiple claims to and relations of authority. On the one hand, the OCP recognizes the city as a form of nested authority within the state: the OCP is a bylaw under the authority of Part 26 (“Planning and Land Use Management”) of the Local Government Act. However, it also displays the tensions, contestations, and limitations of this nested authority. The OCP bylaw is subject to decisions and revisions by provincial courts. However, even when enacted, the bylaw “does not commit or authorize the municipality to proceed with any project specified” (Kelowna 2015: 4). On the other hand, then, the OCP recognizes political authority as split, contradictory, discretionary, and emergent: the OCP as a bylaw must negotiate its goals with the Agricultural Land Reserve, the School Board, and other sites, bodies, and processes of local authority (Magnusson 1985), and its authority cannot stretch even to the over-arching geographical authority of the Regional District, let alone further afield to processes the might have

local impact. Further, when faced with the contiguous boundaries between the City of Kelowna and the Westbank First Nation, which has its own unique self-governing agreement with the federal government, and the unceded Syilx land that the City is emplaced on, the OCP is exposed to the limits of the presumed spatiality of authority – the limits of the bounding of sovereignty within a singular territory – again in a dual sense. On the one hand, the self-governing agreement between WFN and Canada means that WFN regulations are outside the hierarchical and nested structure of Canada/BC/municipal law. And, on the other hand, the negotiated self-government agreement with Canada derives its authority from the state and therefore repeats, if now significantly shifted, the constructions of parallel authorities. In all cases, then, the desire of the City of Kelowna to use its planning authority to shape its urban place confronts the limits of its spatialized authority.

The Official Community Plan therefore functions as a plan in a unique sense: it is not a blueprint from which a “sustainable community” can be constructed, but a guide to the desires and fears that are reflected, refracted, and diffracted through visions of sustainable community and the voids and silences of these visions. It is a statement of possibility for a form of future that can maintain the right forms of past and present. It is a statement of a necessary set of actions that can respond to the insecurity of the present situation. And it is, necessarily, a statement of impossibility, as the vision of secure community will never be undertaken in the way outlined, and will be reconstructed in the next plan five years on. Bringing the OCP into focus clarifies that it is not an act of authority but a site of aporetic urbanization, in which sustainability and authority, as much as the spatiotemporal boundaries of urbanization figured as rural/urban, past/present/future, are continually brought into question.

As imaginaries of Kelowna as a sustainable city move through these voids – a gap in the determinations of spatiotemporal boundaries; a gap in determination of community boundaries; a gap in determinations of authority – they diffract again. Through patterns of “interference” (Haraway 1992: n.p.) and erasure, of amplification and silence, they bring into focus another facet of the aporetic spatiotemporality of urbanization, namely that the concern for sustainable community echoes a long-standing problem of political community: how to maintain the identity of the community in the face of continual

replacement of community members. Despite attempting to restrict the complexity of urbanization to a problem of sustainability that can be solved through appropriate spatial and temporal boundary determinations, there is an implicit expectation that the OCP, as the appropriate authority, can secure the life of the community, and thus secure the boundary between communal life and death. It becomes possible to see, then, within the problematic and precarious authorization practices of the OCP, an ongoing grappling with tensions that have been captured, within modern politics, as immanence and transcendence. In the process of grappling with these tensions, the OCP participates not only in the aporetic boundaries of the space and time of authority, but in space and time as the foundation of modern authority. The absence of effective authority within the OCP helps diffract this modern structure, casting scattering and intersecting patterns of compatible and incompatible configurations. These patterns stretch into an assumed forward, to the competing future visions of secure, sustainable community identity, but they also stretch into the assumed backward, raising echoes of Plato's alignment, and final severing, of the individual soul from the soul of the irredeemable city, and echoes of the Derridean limit experience of individual death extended over the life and death of the community. These echoes and reverberations emphasize, yet again, the complicated, insecure, and multiplied spatial and temporal boundaries at work.

The authority of the OCP is presented as a solution to the problems of urbanization, here centralizing around the confusing, threatening reverberation of the spatiotemporal vulnerabilities of political community. Once this authority acts, the insecurities of urbanization are supposed to transform into the securities of the sustainable city. Yet this vision of political authority as the ability to determine the spatial and temporal boundaries of the community, and thus ensure its security in space and time, continually founders: the determinations of rural and urban, and through these, the spatiotemporalized determinations of other cognate boundaries such as nature/culture, tradition/modern, heritage/progress, and whiteness/diversity, are held in an impossible relation of simultaneous progress and return, moving forward and folding back within the spatiotemporal logic of aporetic boundaries. The related concerns about the forms, categories, and experiences of urbanization are collapsed into claims about the spaces and times of urbanization, and particularly sustainable urbanization: the impossible venture to

secure the range of questions and uncertainties raised in the previous essay via the restricted spatiotemporal policy tools of land use planning, zoning, and transportation. Rather than solving the problem, this restriction of the multiple permutations and iterations of the problem to a singular spatiotemporal version merely contributes to the experience of instability. Through all these diffractions, authority is revealed as part of the aporetic problem, rather than the solution to it.

Thus the OCP is an encounter with the construction of the necessity, possibility, and limits of authority expressed in and through spatiotemporal determinations. It is a site of aporetic encounter, of the limit experience. It reflects current thinking about urbanization, creative cities, and sustainable development, but also reflects homely and unhomely perceptions about the past of Kelowna (its vision of an English orcharding heritage), its present (as an immanently diversifying 'real' city) and its future (its dream of becoming both a world-class city and a city linked to its past). Yet the boundary relation of the reflection suggests the ability to implement without contesting or transforming, whereas the OCP demonstrates an ongoing desire for substantive transformation and participates in a complicated momentum. In this sense, the OCP acts prismatically: it tries to harness the trajectories of 'urbanization' and shift its direction and change its speed by passing it through the 'medium' of local initiatives and local authority. In this refraction, the unitary narrative of urbanization as a spatiotemporal process, the unitary intervention of spatial and temporal boundaries, and the unitary division between local and global, are all disentangled to become visible as contested political boundaries and political authorities. Finally, the OCP sets this proliferation of problems, narratives, boundaries, and authorizations in motion, not as a singular trajectory, but as multi-temporal and multi-spatial determinations and disruptions: of urbanization and therefore of space and time; of local and government, and therefore of authority; of culture, life, and identity; of sustainability and therefore security; of authenticity and community.

The OCP, therefore, is premised on its presumed authority to reflect standard configurations of both modern urbanization and modern politics. It mobilizes a commitment to linear, developmental, and historical narratives of urbanization as progress, not just towards (immanently) becoming a big city, but towards becoming the

right kind of (transcendent) city; and it expresses the continual fear that the inherent qualities of both the rural and the urban can threaten this hope of becoming the right kind of city. This dual mobilization depends on a claim about the existence, and even the necessity, of cities in a certain form, and in a certain relation to each other and the non-city. It continually assumes, but does not directly address, contemporary global urbanization as the condition of possibility for these cities. It draws a connection between seeing a place and knowing a place, and posits the continued reliability of quantifiable metrics of growth, development, economy and more conceptual categories of culture, creativity, and quality of (the good) life for authenticity and identity. Finally, it holds that local experience of an urban place is sufficient to observe, understand, and intervene in the progresses and failures of urbanization, the developing form of the city, and the relevant events and analytical categories of description, policy, and planning. It wraps this complex set of assumptions about the progressive spacetime, stable ontology, positivist epistemology, and pointillist phenomenology of urbanization into a practice of politics according to the modern political logic, whereby the (local) state holds legitimate, if delegated, authority to make the necessary determinations and interventions. Through public planning processes that claim to give voice to local experience, through appropriate research mechanisms, and through continual efforts to stabilize Kelowna's urban form as a relation between past, present, and future, the OCP presents itself as a democratic, inclusive, accurate, and effective account of the politics of urbanization in Kelowna.

However, by passing this apparently singular political configuration through the mediating concerns about urbanization that are expressed throughout narrative accounts of Kelowna, the OCP can be used as an opening into emplacements and displacements, occupations and evacuations, compositions and voids, which diffracts this supposedly singular structure to create patterns of interference where conflicts and inconsistencies collide. Tracing patterns of insecurity and dynamics of progress and return make visible, obliquely, the operative voids and gaps. None of the boundaries that the OCP attempts to determine – not boundaries of rural/urban, or tradition/modern, or local/global, and certainly not boundaries of authenticity, identity, community, security, and authority – exist as such, but all are operative. At times, they work to amplify each other, while at

others, they attenuate or undermine each other, bringing the patterns of instability into focus. These boundaries function both as *productions of spacetime* and as *operations in spacetime*, but to see them only as such is to narrow the problem in an attempt to make it more manageable, and thus to configure politics according to a logic of authoritative determinations and effective management. Understood as an aporetic site, the OCP has the effect of destabilizing its own claims of Kelowna as a singular “place” occupying a stable spacetime, and therefore stable ontological status, epistemological category, and broadly phenomenological experience within a single, shared political condition organized by the transformations of global urbanization. When the OCP is held in the centre of focus, it is possible to see how it works to configure a secure political condition out of the spatiotemporal instability of aporetic boundaries. What is at stake in this narrow focus on the work underway is not simply a problem that also functions in ontological, epistemological, or phenomenological registers, but a problem with the boundaries that configure space and time, forms, categories, and encounters as distinct from and bearing a given relation with each other.

### **Bernard Avenue Revitalization**

The OCP clarifies some elements of aporetic logic, particularly the collapse of complexity and uncertainty into the desire to fix the boundaries of the space and time of community; the insecurity of these determinations and the resulting spatiotemporal dynamic of the aporetic logic; the desire for authenticity and identity in the community and the desire for an authority that can keep this stable across space and over time. The *Bernard Avenue Revitalization* project can be understood primarily as an effect of these planning and policy priorities and decisions of the OCP. Bernard Avenue is considered the historic main street of downtown Kelowna. At its western-most end, it meets the lakeshore and City Park, and it extends east out of downtown into the residential communities beyond. The majority of Kelowna’s heritage commercial buildings are located on, or adjacent to, Bernard Avenue. The purpose and parameters of the Bernard Avenue Revitalization are articulated in a planning document from 2011 (Kelowna 2011a), and the project was finally completed in late 2013. Envisioned as a comprehensive response to ongoing concerns about the loss of vitality in the downtown

core, which centralize on Bernard Avenue more than any other location, the Revitalization project can also be seen as an effect of these aporetic dynamics of spatiotemporal construction, authority, and insecurity. It offers another specific contextualization of aporetic boundary practices, not only responding to, but also generating new patterns of emplacement and displacement. As such, the Revitalization project opens the possibility of locating an aporetic hiatus in process, and the possibility of pausing to encounter, rather than secure, the limit experiences it offers.

The Revitalization project is one of a long line of proposals, plans, and policies to draw social and commercial activity back to the downtown core. It explicitly participates in the contemporary urban planning emphasis on development as “place-making,” a strategy of identifying and materializing in built form what is unique about a community in order to market the community as a both a creative and a competitive city. In the language of place-making, these efforts are undertaken to improve the capacity for residents to “live, work, and play” in the community; the focus is therefore on recreation, culture, and economy. As with the OCP, the Revitalization project included consultations with downtown businesses, the Chamber of Commerce, and residents, culminating in a comprehensive document of themes and design standards to guide construction and ornamentation: “[t]he design theme that emerged from the community consultation process was ‘landscape inspired’ and the execution is contemporary rather than historical in form” (Moore 2013: n.p.). Following the overarching design standards (Kelowna 2011a), the strategy divided Bernard Avenue into three zones, “evoking a distinct sense of place and the natural beauty of the area:” an aquatic zone by the lake; an agriculture and cultural history zone in the middle; and a hillsides and grasslands zone by Richter Street (Zielinski 2013: n.p.). As the intersection of Bernard Avenue and Richter Street functions as the entry to the downtown core, this section of Bernard becomes a figurative “gateway” to downtown Kelowna. The design standards outline spatial requirements, such as sidewalk depths, planting zones, outdoor eatery patios, road width, and parking orientations, while also articulating a coherent aesthetic approach to incorporating the three themes into the hard finishings within the zones, such as traffic bullards, lighting, paving stones, and benches. The design standards draw the connection between its aestheticized built environment and the goals of place-making by arguing that

a variety of permanent and ephemeral elements contribute to giving places a distinct and memorable identity. ... Bernard Avenue's identity is rooted in its history and the experiences people share here. ... above all else, experiences are what make a place memorable (Kelowna 2011a: 9).

In order to support this shared experience of downtown, the redesign emphasizes an increase in spaces for the “public” to congregate. Ultimately, this place-making project represents an effort to materialize Kelowna's historic identity and memories of shared experiences by constructing new spaces, and generating new forms, practices, and experiences that can fill this space with appropriate, *authentic* relations among residents and between residents and the place they inhabit. Thus, the Revitalization project articulates its commitment to the singular location of an authentic place within universal space and linear time.

However, as these relations are to be produced, here, via the spatial and temporal determinations made by the Revitalization project, the redesign patently has to construct other forms of spatiotemporality in its efforts to emplace such a community: “[t]he design of the street will support ... the hierarchy of spaces and site elements that provide for authentic experiential programming” (Kelowna 2011a: 9). The glancing reference to ‘hierarchies’ of spaces refracts the work of this aestheticized and spatiotemporalized intervention into the built environment of Kelowna, making visible the relationship between *authenticity* and the *authority* to determine, define, and delineate appropriate or stable boundaries and spatiotemporalized relations. This capacity is a core desire of the revitalization work, as suggested by Walter Gray, Mayor during the project: “[f]or me personally having grown up in Kelowna when the city was only 4,700 people and eight square miles, Bernard Avenue was Kelowna. This is an opportunity to re-define what Kelowna is about” (Moore 2012: n.p.). There is an implicit claim to improve the condition of the political community by developing bonds of affinity with each other and with shared public places. In the description of Andrew Gibbs, Parks and Public Space Projects Manager with the City of Kelowna during this process, “[p]lacemaking draws on a community's assets, inspiration and potential to create vibrant public spaces that promote discovery and enjoyment, and enhance the community's attachment to public spaces” (Waters 2013: n.p.). Thus the range of boundary determinations materialized

through the revitalization project represents an attempt not simply to produce a reflection of Kelowna's authentic identity but to make an authoritative statement about Kelowna's political identity.

The place-making strategies attempt to work kaleidoscopically, offering reflections upon reflections that are, in practice, defining and centralizing what Kelowna 'is,' repeating these determinations continually through textual accounts and the aestheticized material environment. This emplacement of an authentic urban experience is pursued through attempts to resolve a range of the spatiotemporal boundary insecurities noted in the OCP, but the void at the heart of Kelowna diffracts these problematic and exclusionary boundaries and make visible the displacements they perform. So, for instance, these place-making strategies are bound up in the anticipated patterns of 'global' urbanization, which are supposed to make it necessary for competitive creative cities to amplify the specificity and authenticity of their local identity to be heard at the global level; and yet this contemporary authenticity, as a mode of being relevant to global urbanization, is delineated by repeating the spatial, temporal, and conceptual boundaries that enable modern narratives of urbanization as both linear progress and as stable, appropriate, sustainable development. Not surprisingly, the rural/urban boundary is referenced as a primary boundary determination made through the revitalization project as a technique of marking the historic centre of Kelowna as an urbanization project: "[a]s the main street in the historic downtown core of Kelowna, Bernard Avenue has the proximity, heritage and structure to be Kelowna's 'Great Street'" (Kelowna 2011a: 9). After the revitalization, the gateway at Richter and Bernard will finally, properly, "welcome visitors to downtown" (Moore 2012: n.p.); however, this delineated gateway welcome is necessary, arguably, because the downtown of Kelowna bears so little resemblance to the imaginaries of a 'real city' that additional visual cues are required to orient visitors. And the rural that is essential to Kelowna's self-imaginary are continually referenced throughout the original design standards and in the final constructions.

The inclusion of 'the rural' within the Bernard Avenue Revitalization project is achieved primarily through spatialized and temporalized references to the 'natural' history of Kelowna. Following on the commitment that revitalization includes "...the need for artistic expression in public spaces to give root to a sense of place" (Smith 2013:

n.p.), the cultural challenge presented is to create a uniquely local, natural aesthetic: “Street features were chosen to be in keeping with the natural elements and history of the Okanagan, with benches and pavers made of natural stone, and light poles that, like the Downtown library, draw their inspiration from the heavy timbers used in the Kettle Valley Railway trestles” (Moore 2013: n.p.). Amongst other design-oriented features, such as traffic bollards with thematic cutouts, are also “sporadically placed polished basalt pavers” that feature engravings of local animals and plants (Waters 2013: n.p.). These pavers provide the name for the flora and fauna in English, Latin, and Nsyilxcen, the language of the Syilx people. The intended impression, presumably, is of a welcome reflection of the “nature” that is personally encountered in and around the city.

The Gateway to downtown provides an even more prominent recognition of the Syilx people, with banners produced by WFN artists Janine Lott and Jordan Coble, in partnership with the City of Kelowna, supported by metal posts that say *Welcome* in English and *Limlint* (thank you) in Nsyilxcen (KCN 2013: n.d.). Indeed, not only are the themes of the revitalization “derived from our local natural and cultural heritage,” but they act as “tributes to the First Nation people of this area” (Waters 2013: n.d.). According to Lott, “[t]he theme of the banners is ‘the land is our culture’ and celebrates the Okanagan/Syilx people and their connection to the land” (KCN 2013: n.d.). The banners incorporate both traditional aboriginal art elements, particularly the four food chiefs that have guided Syilx relations with the land, and non-traditional elements that represent contemporary Kelowna, such as the urban skyline and ‘The Sails’ iconic art work. WFN chief Robert Louis called “the inclusion of First Nations art on the new-look Bernard Avenue in the heart of Kelowna ‘very significant’” (KCN 2013: n.d.): whereas the presence of the Syilx people has historically been negated, voided, these efforts at inclusion represent complicated attempts to redefine the relations between the settler community and the Syilx.

The redesign standards also make a very public effort to redefine who gets to participate in public spaces, emphasizing the work that was done to make the spatial and material reconstructions more “accessible,” particularly for people with visual disabilities. Common features such as truncated domes (the yellow bumps that indicate sidewalk edges) were included at road crossings, as well as more innovative features such

as braille street names on the traffic bollards. But even as one form of inclusion was materialized, criticisms were voiced that other forms of exclusions were implicitly repeated. For example, one resident expressed public concern that the information banners installed on fencing during construction perpetuated the imaginary of Kelowna as a white community. “There was not a lot of diversity represented [on the banners],” Kamilla Bahbahani is quoted as saying (CBC 2012: n.p.), and she goes on to say that “I can tell you that I personally felt excluded, that I was concerned for the message this would send my daughter about her place in this town and who is welcome” (CBC 2012: n.p.). These debates can be understood as contestations over the acceptable or dominant boundaries of inclusion and exclusion, with their performative assumptions of what type of person is welcome to participate in the construction of public space and public experience in Kelowna. While Bahbahani observes that “[t]here didn’t seem to be a lot of diversity in ancestry in particular and everyone did appear to be able bodied and other types of diversity also weren’t represented” (CBC 2012: n.p.), a representative of the City of Kelowna stated that residents who responded to the public call to be featured on the banners were of Latin American, Lebanese, and European descent, and that other City marketing materials have “individuals of African-American and Asian descent” (CBC 2012: n.p.). However, they also can be understood as contestations over the work that ‘representations’ do. Here, the contestation is framed as a choice between representations that ‘reflect’ what is presumed, in positivist terms, to be an account of ‘what is’ (“community” banners in Kelowna that reflect the statistical presence of the 6% of residents that identify as visible minorities), or representations that ‘reflect’ normative claims about ‘what should be’ (“community” banners in Kelowna that reflect claims about welcoming diversity, even if it ‘represents’ something other than what ‘really is’). The possibilities of representation become limited here to a particular spatiotemporal boundary of community (what is now, versus what might be later). Yet this debate therefore also focuses on the assumption that relations of subjects and objects in representation are straightforward, linear, and indisputable, and refracts it into unstable possibilities and uncertain boundaries.

In other words, rather than simply ushering in a neoliberal urban restructuring, the place-making strategies and constructions of the Bernard Avenue Revitalization project

demonstrate how urbanization functions through the interplay between conflicting representations of Kelowna, materializations in spatiotemporal form and embodied subjective practices, and emplacements in and displacements from more distantiated global processes. But the boundaries being delineated and secured are more complex than the modern transition narratives of urbanization (rural/urban, nature/culture, tradition/modern, civilized/savage, whiteness/other). This emphasis on authenticity of shared experience of past, present, and future through urban design appears demonstrably *hollow*: this revitalization offers only a *spectacle* of a unique connection between Kelowna and the Okanagan landscape, as actual agricultural possibilities and inclusive spaces are constrained by concrete and expensive, exclusive design constructions;<sup>38</sup> this revitalization offers only a *repetition* of colonial displacements, as the ‘connection’ to the land is claimed while historical processes of preempting the land are ignored and contemporary land claims are obscured; and this revitalization expresses only a *caricature* of the presumed immanent diversity and inclusion of a “real” city, while simultaneously repeating historical exclusions of non-white residents.

The play of visual presences and absences, and the use of discursive and material representations to capture voids, is echoed in the design standards for the revitalization project:

[t]he Kelowna Placemaking Strategy marks a shift away from the traditional commissioning of stand-alone public art objects to a new approach that allows for the creation of contemporary artistic installations that are thoughtfully integrated into the design. The goal for the place- making strategy is to create a cohesive and authentic public realm that embodies a sense of place unique to Kelowna (Kelowna 2011a: 50).

Though decontextualized, this is a powerful claim to redefine not only the boundaries of urbanization in Kelowna but also the practices and effects of representations of and in urban space. These design standards, part of a larger shift in City policy, redirect public funds away from independently commissioned public art – works that may be disjointed in style and subject; that may be contradictory or divergent; that may be critical or contestational – and instead direct them towards works that are pre-approved as part of a

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<sup>38</sup> Okanaganokanogan.com.

“cohesive,” centralized and aestheticized account of the urban “public realm,” and thus of the politics of urbanization in Kelowna. This is not to say that such works cannot still trouble claims of authentic urban identity and coherent urban space and time, as will be developed and returned to over time, but that such an over-arching policy decision participates in a reduction of the complexity of urbanization, and of politics, into a spatiotemporally defined, constructed, constrained, and secured “authentic public realm.” Such a policy suggests the extent to which the desire for authenticity of place does not simply generate dynamic patterns *of* space and time, and *in* space and time, but actively seeks to limit and manage these patterns of spatiotemporal production, emplacement, and displacement.

This spatiotemporal work can be observed as extensively embedded in the materializations of the revitalized Bernard Avenue, just as this work can be observed to continually exceed the attempts to centralize Kelowna’s authentic identity within this location. The Revitalization project works to delineate clearly the space of downtown from the outside, through elements such as the “gateway” and the distinctive light posts and sidewalk pavings that are only present on this stretch of Bernard Avenue, while concurrently ensuring the continued flows of people and vehicles through downtown. Bernard Avenue becomes spatially constructed as a hub in a diverse network, an off-centre centre in the horizontal and vertical extension of the city, and a summit in the “hierarchy” of the urban public realm. Similarly, the Revitalization project works to delineate clearly the time of downtown as now, new, and thus appropriately urban, while ensuring that the natural and cultural “heritage” of the region grounds the downtown transformation. Further, the Revitalization project clearly delineates how people, objects, and vehicles are supposed to occupy and navigate the space and time of Bernard Avenue: it constructs and constrains the “travel/traffic zone” of the road; the “furnishings” zone where benches, light posts, and plantings are located; the “passage” zone for easy movement; and the “frontage” zone that segues into the commercial activity of businesses (Kelowna 2011a: 24), particularly in the form of patios to amplify the street life of Bernard Avenue, and thus its vitality. This spatiotemporal strategy works, then, to define built space, speed of movement, and the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of human bodies in this bounded space and time. It attempts to deal with the insecurity of

urbanization by ensuring spatiotemporal security, both in defining, planning, and managing activities and relations in the downtown core and in defining and securing an authentic identity for the community, in space and over time.

The spatiotemporal strategies of the Bernard Avenue Revitalization seek to determine, specify, and authenticate ‘place,’ but insofar as the Revitalization project repeats these patterns of determinations, specifications, and authentications, it displays its aporetic contours. Mayor of the time, Walter Gray, claims that the revitalization project is an act that redefines the core of Kelowna. He states that through this reconstruction “we are starting to perform a heart transplant here on Bernard” (Moore 2012: n.p.), and that in the finished product we “will see Kelowna’s main street become the centre piece of downtown – the heart of the city” (Moore 2012: n.p.). By focusing on the heart, the ability to embody life is centralized into a familiar modern form. Thus, urbanization here is being envisioned as a revision of the spatiotemporality of political subjectivity: if the individual is insecure through death, changing the space and time of political identity offers the hope of a deathless, limitless urbanized community. Yet the repetition of these spatiotemporalized boundaries of politics merely raises the continual fear of their ostensible collapse or irrelevance, whether due to perceived local threats of a “dying” downtown or to the perceived changing contexts of global urbanization, and thus the repetition of their redefinitions in space and time. The language of revitalization also diffracts here, to illuminate complicated patterns of thought about security as a matter of life and death, of both the body and the city (Sennett 1994). At stake, then, in the patterns of spatiotemporal productions within aporetic urbanization, is not simply the power to define secure politics as authentic community, but to constrain possible definitions of politics to this spatiotemporal configuration.

As such, Walter Gray’s emotive statement clarifies that the stake in this aporetic logic of urbanization is not simply the boundaries of authentic urban community but the boundaries of political authority. The concern for an authentic community identity diffracts here, against the articulations and materializations of this identity, to produce familiar patterns of concern for secure political communities and for forms of authority that can ensure this security through time and across space. The line between political community and its exterior is drawn, but on the basis of fundamentally contestable

representations of urbanization that lay claim to competing imaginaries of “here and now,” “the place we want to be,” and “the place we want to forget.” The continual need to repeat and re-present these determinations suggests that ‘authenticity’ does not contain the authorizing power that is assumed. Thus the Bernard Avenue Revitalization project enables an encounter with the limits of a spatiotemporal construction of political authority and political security.

A description of the ornamental cut metal and light features, located on the wooden light poles along the length of the ‘revitalized’ stretch of Bernard Avenue, articulate these limits. The ornamental lights were designed by local artist Crystal Przybille,<sup>39</sup> as part of the “cohesive” approach to incorporating public art into the design standards for the project. There are forty-eight panels in all, featuring six distinct designs that are repeated eight times each, two designs for each of the themed zones. These light panels participate in and operate according to the claims of the design standards to redefine the authentic identity of Kelowna and thus assert the centrality of the downtown core. However, they also highlight the limits of this authorizing effort. According to the private firm that consulted on the overall project design standards,

[t]he designs ‘zoom in’ on nature, utilizing patterning and slight abstraction. The compositions become 3-dimensional through use of spacing and layering. The images ‘come alive’ by extending past the confines of the trapezoidal plate, and glow at their hearts with a ‘stained glass’ element that captures light and attention (Huhtala 2013).

This description hints at how these lights displace narratives of a coherent, cohesive, and natural development for Kelowna, and emplace instead the operative gaps in this narrative. The light fixtures hint at the work involved in approaching Kelowna on aporetic political terms. By referencing the visual and conceptual strategies of zooming in, patterning, and abstracting, we are directed to modes of seeing that are active and participatory, and that open alternative configurations of relations within space and time and *with* space and time. Similarly, the references to spacing and layering make clear the necessary practices of holding together while holding apart. The “glow” in their hearts draws attention to the pull of centring strategies, the work that is done to pause and focus

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<sup>39</sup> <https://sites.google.com/site/crystalprzybille/>.

on a defined core, and yet the images can only “come alive” by exceeding the boundaries as constructed, thereby generating a spatiotemporal dynamic of other possibilities of temporary centres yet to come. These lights reference the momentum of aporetic urbanization, and also the vulnerabilities and possibilities at its limits. Contemplating these multi-plated lights, then, becomes one way to experience the aporetic hiatus of the spatiotemporal possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities within the politics of urbanization in Kelowna. The acts of delimitation and the impossibility of delimitations exist simultaneously; both and neither are in scope and in focus. They offer a pause in the rush towards appropriate urbanization and authentic political community.

Similarly, the gateway banners, as a largely decontextualized use of Syilx cultural imagery, can be framed as consistent with neoliberal place-making and neocolonial urban development: as a City project, it fosters a practical, and mutually beneficial, relationship between the City and WFN, and it tries to solidify Kelowna’s claims to authentic identity through a positive relationship, not just with its Indigenous flora and fauna, but with the people who are aboriginal to this land. And yet for Westbank First Nation artist Janine Lott and WFN apprentice artist Jordon Coble, the banners exceed this limited frame. Rather than simply participating in the revitalization of Bernard Avenue, these banners were designed to represent the continued vitality of the Syilx people, despite the myriad violences and ongoing effects of colonization.<sup>40</sup> The imagery of the four traditional food chiefs includes Siya? (Chief Saskatoon Berry) shown as a bush “constructed of hundreds of individual shoots,” which represents the “strength that results from being in one place for extended generations...as the Syilx have resided on this land for thousands of years.”<sup>41</sup> Another banner visualizes Kelowna as seen, across the lake, from the traditional territories of the Westbank First Nation. Two women look across the lake to a city-scape, identifiable as Kelowna by the presence of the iconic “Sails” statue that sits at the western end of Bernard Avenue, at the gateway to City Park and the lakeshore. Instead of the bridge, there is a canoe with two paddlers in the lake. While a reference to the traditional crossing place used by the Syilx, it also refracts singular transitions narratives

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<sup>40</sup> Presentation by Jordan Coble, AlterKnowledge Discussion Event, Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, November 2014.

<sup>41</sup> Westbank First Nation (<http://www.wfn.ca/siya.htm>).

into multiple spatialities and temporalities being co-operative, sending ripples through the lake to both shores. It is not clear which direction the canoe is traveling, and it has not yet completed its passage, which is therefore marked as a pause. These representations unsettle claims that western settlement and urbanization define the configuration of politics that determines place-making in this place. Instead, the banners offer a diffraction of the challenges of engaging with the contemporary space-times, forms, categories, and experiences of Kelowna. By asserting an unceded connection between land, language, and people, these banners perform a different form of land claim and suggest other modes of political vitality: they assert a different configuration of the politics of place in space and time.

Thus operative gaps continue to emerge from the efforts of the Bernard Revitalization Project to rebuild the downtown core of Kelowna as the centre of its political community. These gaps at times become literal, as in Mayor Walter Gray being quoted in a local news article “call[ing] the creation of the banners, and their location, another example of how inclusive he feels [ blank ] has become” (KCN 2013: n.p.). The gap, the missing word, is present in the published text, and while presumably it is to be filled with the name Kelowna, it reconstructs Kelowna as the site of a void that cannot be filled....

## **Ontology**

### **Transitions**

When the variable boundaries that demark the transitions and instabilities of urbanization are configured in spatiotemporal terms, distinctive patterns of interactions emerge, within and between fields of effect and affect. While these spatiotemporal boundaries are drawn and redrawn to identify sources of the perceived insecurity of urbanization and secure them against myriad threats, the claims to ensure sustainable urbanization function as promises to secure the political through the emplacement of a stable community. Yet the spatiotemporal dynamic of the logic of aporetic boundary practices continually destabilizes these efforts, which generates attempts to redraw both

the spatiotemporal boundaries of urbanization and the boundaries of politics and its spatiotemporal limits.

Thinking in terms of patterns facilitates awareness of movements within spatial and temporal contexts: awareness of the convergence and divergence of boundaries, of their trajectories and relations. The seemingly inherent spatiotemporality of patterns seems to draw analyses of the problem of unstable boundaries and their effects and affects inexorably towards processes of emplacement and displacement, amplification and attenuation, progress and regress. Further, patterns frequently take a visual form, such that seeking to identify patterns of boundary practices through representations and images amplifies the tendency towards spatialization, just as the backward-casting and forward-looking dynamics of aporetic boundary practices amplifies the tendencies towards temporalization. Precisely because thinking in terms of patterns facilitates seeing spatial and temporal boundaries as distinct configurations, the emphasis on patterns also facilitates the prioritization of spatiotemporality as the defining and organizing configuration for approaching the phenomena of urbanization. Yet the instability of aporetic boundaries suggests that spatiotemporalized boundaries cannot be prioritized over other possible registers of boundary configurations. Viewing this dynamic in context in Kelowna makes evident the spatiotemporal patterns of aporetic logic – suggesting techniques for seeing boundaries in these terms – while it simultaneously clarifies the continual work that goes into producing and stabilizing these aporetic boundaries. Thus it becomes necessary to shift the focus to patterns that function in other registers, while remaining attentive to the boundary work that enables these temporary distinctions between registers to take the appearance of stable configurations.

For the present, then, the focus shifts from claims about the *spaces and times* of urbanization to claims about the *nature* of urbanization, the conditions of *being* or *becoming* that give form to urbanization. These debates about the form of contemporary urbanization, and the form of urban world that results, frame accounts of urbanization in ontological terms. The emphasis thus shifts from urbanization understood as being or becoming like the urban in material, geographic, sociological, or economic terms, to urbanization understood as a distinctive form of transition that is the condition of possibility for its substantive expressions. This transition, however, should not be framed

in the spatiotemporal terms of progress, development, or improvement. It is not a shift necessitated by the exhaustion of spatiotemporal analysis, or by proof of its inadequacy. It is not a claim to leave a spatiotemporal focus behind and move on to a better, more complete, or more accurate mode of accounting for urbanization in Kelowna. Instead, the transition is kaleidoscopic. Where, in the previous section, focus was directed to spatiotemporal configurations and allowed, temporarily, to centralize and intensify analysis, the shift in focus now serves to centralize, temporarily, how accounts of urbanization also function through ontological configurations. This focus clarifies one set of patterns, even as it vacates the role of other patterns, other configurations of relevant boundaries.

This shift in focus requires another form of transition, one that also must not be framed in spatiotemporal terms: a transition in the function of representations and imaginaries and their characteristic aporetic patterns. Where analyses of patterns in representations and imaginaries seem to provide intuitive analytical purchase, trying to gain insight into the configuration of boundaries in ontological terms through imaginaries and representations seems not just counter-intuitive, but particularly problematic. On the one hand, ontology, understood as a condition of possibility, a statement on the 'nature' of the world, is configured as prior to and more fundamental than representation; and on the other hand, ontology and representation have been bound within a particular modern configuration of the political, of subject and object. Thus, the question of how to encounter aporetic boundary patterns in ontological terms, rather than solely spatiotemporal terms or aesthetic terms, is especially challenging. The focus needs to locate and intensify, temporarily, the patterns of effect and affect that result from boundary practices that seek to constitute the conditions of possibility and impossibility for urbanization. Following the aporetic logic of boundary practices, the work of figuring how to proceed cannot be undertaken abstractly, but only in and through contextualized practices.

Whether approached through the common tendency to see forms of urban life as forms of political community, or approached through theoretical claims – that becoming urban entails becoming political (Isin 2002); that the urban offers an alternative, non-sovereign condition of politics (Magnusson 2011a) – ontological claims about

urbanization in Kelowna become a site for promoting and debating claims about ontologies of politics. There is a transition in perceptions of instability and in practices designed to stabilize, such that imaginaries of stable, sustainable urbanization function as promises of secure ontological politics. When these patterns of claims, and the patterns of their effects, are pulled into focus, the characteristic pattern of aporetic logic again becomes apparent, drawing attention to how debates about contemporary urbanization are continually presented as debates about ontological possibilities and impossibilities. While the aporetic logic enables recognition of and engagement with these patterns, it does not enable making definitive claims regarding what exists ‘as such’ or what the representations represent ‘as such.’ Attending to the political logic of aporetic urbanization does not offer an alternative ontology of urbanization, or of politics, but instead explores the patterns of instability and stabilization that emerge as an effect of the impossibility of ontological politics. And continually, simultaneously, the aporetic logic is encountered as the limit experience, including the limits of boundaries between spatiotemporality, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology as distinct and separable configurations, rather than fragile constructions that authorize decisions on comprehensibility, but only temporarily.

This contextualized transition, then, shifts from a singular focus on the OCP, to a focus on specific proposals for urban developments in Kelowna as a complex of boundary practices. The following encounter with these proposals and projects examines the patterns at play in visions of the insecurity of urbanization as a condition of and for the political – variously but consistently defined as the community, the good life, human being, and now the planet – and visions of the conditions for its security, frequently framed as visions of sustainable urbanization.

### **Model developments and boundary practices**

#### *From the OCP to development models*

Within and against the processes, productions, and imaginaries of the Official Community Plan – which were brought into focus in the previous section – land owners, developers, community organizations, and self-defined visionaries propose and debate models of appropriate and desirable urbanization, of routes to becoming a ‘world-class’ sustainable city. The models can be grouped into three types, namely, the sustainable

suburb, the densified urban core, and the intentional eco-village. While these models are distinct in their proposed built form, and arguably their geographic, sociological, economic, and ecological effects, they all attempt to identify the conditions of insecurity that urbanization creates or exacerbates and propose the possibility that urbanization might exist in an idealized form. These models aim not simply to transform, more or less, the form of Kelowna's urban development, but to transform what it might mean to be 'a city' in the contemporary urban world. These models of development debate possible forms of community as an achievement of a particular relationship between the rural and the urban, and the cognate boundaries that have defined urbanization. Thus, these models replay the familiar problem of boundaries, but now the focus shifts to how these boundaries participate in making specific ontological claims about urbanization, and participate in making claims about urbanization as an ontological condition.

Each of the models envisions a distinct form of urban community and mobilizes a distinct material and discursive relationship between these boundaries. First, following from the predominance of suburban developments over the past 30 years and the increasing criticisms of suburban sprawl as ecologically, socially, and economically distressing, is a model of the sustainable suburb. These communities, such as the Village of Kettle Valley<sup>42</sup> and Wilden,<sup>43</sup> rely on changed planning principles and construction practices to promise communities with a renewed balance between access to nature and proximity to urban culture. The second model, that of a world-class urban centre, would reconstruct the historic downtown as a densified urban core featuring skyscraper condominiums, hotels and conference centres, pedestrianization, affordable housing, commercial sustainability hubs, and a reconstituted "public realm." The city-led projects of the Comprehensive Development 21<sup>44</sup> rezoning proposal, now canceled and replaced by various other downtown revitalization projects (including the Bernard Avenue Revitalization project addressed in the previous section), and the slowly proceeding Central Green<sup>45</sup> development, exemplify this model. Finally, the third model of

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<sup>42</sup> [Http://www.kettlevalley.com](http://www.kettlevalley.com) (accessed November 8, 2009).

<sup>43</sup> [Http://www.wilden.ca](http://www.wilden.ca) (accessed November 8, 2009).

<sup>44</sup> [Http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1280.aspx](http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1280.aspx) (accessed November 8, 2009). As noted in Essay Two, this plan is also referred to as the CD21 zone and the downtown revitalization plan.

<sup>45</sup> [Http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1336.aspx](http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1336.aspx) (accessed November 9, 2009).

intentional eco-villages seeks to build new forms of ecological, multi-generational family-friendly neo-villages that are presented as the evolution of urban form to suit the post-industrial twenty-first century. Examples of this trend include the proposed Avalon Ecovillage<sup>46</sup> and the now-languishing BlueGreen Living Community.<sup>47</sup> These three distinct models of how Kelowna can reconstitute itself as a sustainable city are being explored and debated within the context of a formal public commitment to sustainable urbanization by the City of Kelowna and informal public debates about what that entails and what spaces, forms, and practices of community will best achieve these goals.

Before turning to these examples, it is important to note that claims about the integrity or stability of these models are always already undermined in material and discursive terms: various proposals within each of the models studied here are well on their way to completion; some are running into consistent blocks that require the development proposals to undergo significant revision; and some have already been cancelled, or moved to other cities. However, what follows is not an analysis of why some proposals succeed when others fail, or of which would be the best path for urbanization in Kelowna. Rather, as new proposals consistently arise within each of the three models, the focus is on the patterns of constitution and representation of the models themselves: what vision of sustainable community they promise and how this stability is to be achieved, in the built community and in the model itself. Therefore, what follows is not, and cannot be, a comprehensive and objective account of the development proposals and projects, but instead participates in processes of representation that remain partial. Nor does the following engagement present a claim that their grouping into three distinct models follows as a linear and necessary response to the sites as objects that exist independently in the world. A different set of questions and relations are being pursued, namely: what do these models display or make visible about patterns of claims about the ontology of urbanization, and patterns of effects of these claims; what do these patterns tell us about the transition narratives that continue to plague urbanization and politics; and how and why do these transition narratives – in this case, figured as and through the models of development that transition from one mode of sustainable urbanization to the

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<sup>46</sup> [Http://www.avalonalliance.org](http://www.avalonalliance.org) (link not working when accessed November 8, 2009).

<sup>47</sup> [Http://www.livingcommunities.ca](http://www.livingcommunities.ca) (accessed November 8, 2009).

next, better mode – generate the tendency to return to the forms of politics (the ontological boundaries between politics and its limits) that urbanization is supposed to be transitioning beyond. This is not a problem to solve. Rather, urbanization in Kelowna provides a context through which to pose the problem, and proceed to open, rotate, test, and probe the problem, until it becomes possible to demonstrate its contours, including its gaps.

The method for attempting to see these aporetic boundary productions at work will be, once again, directed primarily through the focus on patterns of reflection, refraction, and diffraction that are generated within and between the developments and their proposed models of urbanization. Just as the kaleidoscopic icon for the City of Kelowna acts as a hint for how to engage with aporetic sites and sights, the icon for Avalon Ecovillage uses kaleidoscopic imagery to visualize its purpose. An abstracted kaleidoscope image, which forms the letter ‘o’ in the Avalon name, full of rainbowed colours that represent the various elements of the Avalon Alliance vision, is echoed by a literal kaleidoscope image, also portraying a rainbow of colours in synchronic pattern. The repetition of rainbow colours reinforces the vulnerable boundary that distinguishes processes of reflection and intensification (the kaleidoscope) from processes of mediation and dispersion (the prism), while the lack of literal figuration of diffraction highlights the need to be attentive to gaps and the processes of amplification and attenuation that they can create. Sometimes the prevalence of these patterns, and their role in constituting imaginaries of possible, necessary, and impossible urban forms, are referenced explicitly. For example, the CD 21 Zone Comprehensive Development Guidelines constitute the relation of nature and culture within urban form in comprehensive terms, simultaneously evocative and suffocative

[b]uildings should appear to ‘grow’ out of the earth or landscape and should express a sense of weight without appearing excessively bulky. ...The intention is for the streetscape to be the foundation for an integrated vertical building composition, whose base reflects the regional rock and soil, and whose top reflects the agricultural and natural landscapes (Kelowna 2008d: 8).

More often, the patterns of reflection, refraction, and diffraction are made visible only through a process of layering, compiling, shifting, and comparing. Thus the following

engagement with practices of ontological boundary configuration that these models undertake returns, via the public documentation of the models, to familiar accounts of the relevant boundaries of urbanization in Kelowna, yet exposes these accounts to an intentional process of intensification, mediation, and evacuation.

### *Model developments*

The two projects that are representative of the model of the sustainable suburb are both owned by private development companies. The Village of Kettle Valley,<sup>48</sup> on the southern edge of Kelowna, is owned and developed by Kettle Valley Development Ltd. The master plan for the village was created by Ekistics<sup>49</sup> urban planning and design firm, in explicit accordance with the principles of New Urbanism. The focus is primarily on developing a form of social and environmental sustainability that was seen to be lacking in suburbs and city centres alike, a “perfect hamlet ... nestled on a hillside overlooking Okanagan Lake,” rooted in “tradition” and “communal values.” Construction on the 285 acre (115 ha) plot of land began in 1995, and at this point the majority of the planned 929 units have been built, including single-family and multi-family dwellings, a mixed-use village centre and one of two planned schools. The community also includes open spaces, several parks, and nature trails. The infrastructure costs alone for the development are estimated by Ekistics at \$40 million (Ekistics: Kettle Valley).

Wilden<sup>50</sup> is a private suburban development in the highlands on the northern edge of Kelowna. The land is owned and developed by Glenwest Developments Inc., and advertised as an environmentally-sensitive community. The master plan, again created by Ekistics, uses “traditional village design” to address “Wilden’s sensitive ecology” and “redefine the standards for hillside home construction” by working with existing topography, altering road and lot dimensions, and using geothermal energy. The development covers over 2,000 acres (720 ha), with a planned 2,800 housing units at completion, in a mix of single-family dwellings, town homes, and row houses, as well as a designated village centre with mixed-use buildings and a school site. Over 1,000 acres

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<sup>48</sup> <http://www.kettlevalley.com> (accessed November 8, 2009). Unless otherwise cited, all quotes in reference to particular developments were taken from the proposal websites as written when accessed.

<sup>49</sup> <http://www.ekistics.ca> (accessed November 8, 2009).

<sup>50</sup> <http://www.wilden.ca> (accessed November 8, 2009).

are committed to parks, trails, and protected waters. Wilden is the largest residential development project between Vancouver and Calgary, and, at a projected cost of \$2.1 billion, it has been listed as the second largest construction project of any sort in British Columbia (Business Edge 2008: n.p.). Construction began in 2002 and is projected to be complete by 2020.

The two proposals that have sought to lead the redevelopment of the downtown core as a sustainable world-class city are organized by the City of Kelowna. The first project, variously called the Comprehensive Development Zone, CD21 Zone, or Downtown Revitalization plan,<sup>51</sup> proposes to rebuild a four-block area of the downtown waterfront. The plan envisions a pedestrian-friendly, high-density zone in which to “live, work, and play.” Downtown residential density is presented as the necessary solution to the problem of suburban sprawl. The plan calls for buildings that “should appear to ‘grow’ out of the earth or landscape,” yet the proposal has been controversial primarily for the radical change it would bring to the built form of the area,<sup>52</sup> and only to a lesser extent for the perceived attempt to simply remove rather than help marginalized populations within the downtown core.<sup>53</sup> After consultations with property owners and a series of public advisory meetings, the election in May 2009 of a new City council led to the rejection of the plan. An alternate downtown revitalization planning process is now underway, which includes the Bernard Avenue Revitalization as described in the previous section.

Central Green,<sup>54</sup> the second proposed downtown reconstruction project, is directly south from the CD21 Zone. The site, a total of 13.5 acres owned entirely by the City of

<sup>51</sup> <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1280.aspx> (accessed November 8, 2009).

<sup>52</sup> Where the tallest existing buildings are less than ten storeys, the zoning allows 14 towers of up to 27 storeys in exchange for amenity contributions from developers. Outside the zone area but within a one kilometre radius there are a small number of buildings from 10-15 storeys, and one resort hotel that is approximately 20 storeys.

<sup>53</sup> More controversial still is the basis of the rezoning process, as funding for the City to hire VIA Architecture in Vancouver to develop the plan was initially provided by Westcorp Development corporation, which has interests in developing a property within the proposed CD21 zone. In spring 2007, Westcorp’s proposal to build a hotel and marina on a waterfront property within current CD21 Zone was rejected by the City of Kelowna in part due to federal Ministry of Environment objections to planned infill in Okanagan Lake. Many Kelowna residents feel that the Downtown Revitalization process, as funded by Westcorp, is merely a way to circumvent the initial rejection by placing the development of the proposed hotel within the context of a fully redeveloped downtown.

<sup>54</sup> <http://www.kelowna.ca/CM/Page1336.aspx> (accessed November 9, 2009).

Kelowna, is primarily bare, with construction presently underway on a single parcel within the site. As sole owners, the City of Kelowna set “sustainability principles” to direct the planning process, which include twenty percent of the dwelling units designated affordable housing, five acres devoted to a public park, family- and pedestrian-friendly design, and buildings constructed according to LEED gold standards. The planning consortium<sup>55</sup> conducted “stake-holder” interviews and public consultations to determine neighbourhood and city strengths and weaknesses, develop possible site concepts, and fine-tune the site concept that was most popular. City staff advised council that to be an economically sustainable project it would have to decrease the affordable housing allotment and reduce the LEED building standard requirement (Nieoczym 2009: n.p.) Despite these changes, the City passed the Central Green planning guidelines as the CD22 Zone Bylaw in November of 2011, though it notes that development will be market driven and thus unpredictable in timing. The first building on the site – a support services building and residential apartment operated by Karis Support Services for women with mental health and addiction issues – was opened in August of 2015, but no other developments have been started.

The third model of sustainable urbanization seeks to create new forms of intentional community within the city. Avalon World Centre,<sup>56</sup> on a twelve acre privately-owned site in south-east Kelowna, is being proposed as by a consortium of allied sustainable planning and building professionals, Avalon Alliance Inc. It claims to offer “a rare opportunity to build from the ground up, rather than trying to change old institutions and community structures from within.” The plan proposes an intergenerational single and multi-family residential community and wellness resort, with an environmental education centre, sewage treatment greenhouse, ethical and sustainable businesses, wellness programs, interfaith fellowship and a world art “edutainment” facility. The development plan advertised the business case for capital investment, looking to raise \$6-8 million to cover initial pre- financing capital costs. Over the years,

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<sup>55</sup> These are: BKDI Architects of Calgary (<http://www.bkdi.com>); Sustainability Solutions Group of Vancouver, Victoria, Montreal, and Tatamagouche NS (<http://www.sustainabilitysolutions.ca>); Garry Tomporowski Architects of Kelowna, Guam, and Hong Kong (<http://www.gtarch.ca>); and BTY Group of Calgary (<http://www.bty.com>). All accessed November 8, 2009.

<sup>56</sup> <http://www.avalonalliance.org> Hard copies of the original site were downloaded prior to November 2009, when it went off-line. Current site emerged prior to 2013.

the intent of the project has shifted, from a proposed single ecovillage development, to a larger-scale proposal for regional sustainability plan for the south-east bench of Kelowna and the fragile canyon ecosystem, within which the particular development of Avalon World Centre would be located.

A second sustainable intentional community is proposed by Bluegreen Living Community (BGLC),<sup>57</sup> a planning consultancy group dedicated to combining ecologically sustainable building design with community-controlled neighbourhood design. Their first proposed development for Kelowna sought to gather approximately twenty families into a cohousing community that mixes private residences with communal facilities for sharing meals, social spaces, guest rooms, and other amenities. No land has yet been acquired, but the vision proposes a community “located on the urban fringe, on repurposed land with mature trees” where “[b]y working, playing and making decisions together” residents will “foster strong friendships and strong communities.” The focus of BGLC is on supporting the development of intentional communities and helping them achieve “social, ecological, and fiscal sustainability.” After several attempts to generate interest in Kelowna for a BGLC, members of the group relocated their efforts to Kamloops, approximately 150 kilometres north, though the website is no longer functioning.

Each model of sustainable urbanization in Kelowna promises to establish the good life of the community by redrawing the relations between the boundaries that have defined urbanization: rural and urban, nature and culture, tradition and modern, homogeneity and heterogeneity, and others. While the specific proposals for developments come and go, while some are built and some are abandoned, the claims regarding how sustainable urbanization is to be made *sustainable* – able to withstand the threat of change and instability – remain remarkably consistent. Further, whereas the OCP enabled an intensified focus on the spatiotemporal configurations of sustainability, namely a community secure in space and over time, the transition claims about urban form made through the development models enables an intensified focus on ontological

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<sup>57</sup> <http://www.livingcommunities.ca> (accessed November 8, 2009. No longer available on-line. Hard copies available on request).

configurations of sustainability, namely securing conditions of possibility and making conditions of impossibility impossible.

*Urbanization is the problem/urbanization is the solution*

Each of these models of urbanization is premised on the belief that there is something fundamentally wrong with contemporary urbanization: that urbanization in its contemporary form has reached its limits, in spatial, social, economic, or ecological terms. For example, in a description of the public consultation processes for Central Green, the City-produced project newsletter suggests that “[t]hrough stakeholder interviews, the following issues were identified in Kelowna: Affordable housing shortage; service and retail employee shortage; too much traffic (especially in summer); alarming rate of urban sprawl; insufficient public transit; some residents are too resistant to change; corporatization and resort-ification concerns” (Kelowna 2008a: 2). Avalon Ecovillage ties these specific problems of Kelowna’s urban form to broader concerns, arguing that: “[m]ost of our current institutional systems and infrastructure were designed during the Industrial Revolution, and the old paradigm is disintegrating and becoming increasingly unworkable. As a society, we need to find ways of learning, caring for our health, using our economic resources and living in communities that are more in harmony with the environment and the needs of the twenty-first century” (Avalon: New Millennium Market Trends). In other words, despite frequent criticisms that Kelowna’s problems with its urban form (or lack of sufficiently urban form) can be traced to its specific history of settlement, amalgamation, and planning decisions, such problems are rooted in pervasive conditions that have established the boundaries between possible and impossible trajectories of urbanization. The criticisms articulated by the Avalon Group reflect criticisms frequently made of modern urbanization. Each model offers a solution to this problem, and thus functions to temporalize an insecure *before* and a sustainable *after*. However, they also build sequentially on one another, with the model of the densified downtown core promising to solve the problems of life in the sprawling suburbs, and the model of the intentional ecovillage promising to solve the problems of life in the urban core. Through their claims about the proper, *most sustainable*, form of urbanization, these models offer to resolve the instability generated by the

transformations of contemporary urbanization through decisions in institutional, architectural, and sociological registers.

However, the challenge of *sustainable* urbanization goes beyond a challenge to specific local practices and decisions, requiring instead a focused interjection into, or transformation of, conditions of contemporary urban life. The claims and functions of sustainable urbanization go beyond their most obvious spatial and temporal features, and make necessary the transition to bringing conditions of possibility for security and stability into focus. When the ecovillage model proposes that modern urban and suburban forms have sucked the life from community, leaving only strangers bound together in anonymity and isolation, the emphasis shifts from the space and time of community to the conditions of its perpetuity. BlueGreen Living Community offers not just an alternative development model, but an alternative vision of a possible urban future, asking disaffected inhabitants,

[c]an you imagine living in a supportive, friendly community where you know and trust your neighbours? A community where the needs of people rather than cars prevail? A place that you can feel secure in the knowledge that your neighbours care about you and your property? Where you know that whatever your interests...there is someone nearby with whom you can share your enthusiasms? We call such neighbourhoods living communities. (BGLC: History).

BlueGreen Living Community outlines a particularly explicit a vision of pre-established unity and comprehensive planning to avert insecurity and threat, yet all the development models, depending to greater or lesser extent on master-planned communities or comprehensive redevelopment plans, suggest that security might be found in the ability to predetermine the boundaries of the appropriate or desirable form of urban community. Thus, it becomes necessary to elaborate how these boundaries are drawn and to clarify the contours of their attempted predetermination. An aporetic analysis of the patterns of urban sustainability draws attention to the way that the condition of possibility for ideal and sustainable political communities is continually located in the renewing and redrawing these boundaries, even though contemporary urbanization is thought to have made these very boundaries irrelevant in geographic and political terms. This method suggests that rather than simply becoming *irrelevant* in geographic and political terms,

the ontological status of these boundaries and the entities they are intended to secure are, at this moment, particularly unstable, caught in a dynamic of transition that not only cannot be interpreted in linear spatiotemporal terms, but that also cannot be interpreted through standard ontological configurations.

### **Emplacing the boundaries of urbanization**

#### *Rural/urban*

Following the pattern that dominates accounts of urbanization in Kelowna, each of these development models primarily identifies itself as a particular relationship between accounts of rural and urban, accounts that are predetermined within each development's frame. The Central Green development, one of the two within the model of the densified urban core, encapsulates its account of this relation in its very name: it lays claim to reside right at the "heart of the city" and thus the centre of the urban community, while including, right at the centre of the community, "the central green," evoking the natural, the rural heritage of the Kelowna, and older village traditions whereby the green was the centre of the commons. It offers a new form of urban core, therefore, that might be appropriately modern in its density and architecture, but that can still reclaim forms of community that were common in rural life. The CD 21 Zone suggests a similar need for urban form to include the rural, but proposes to achieve this through a different form of urban development. The emphasis here is on aesthetic inclusion, on determining the appropriate signifiers that will sufficiently modify the "true" urban form of high-density, high rise towers it seeks to materialize in Kelowna. It argues that its "particular opportunity is to reflect the region's ongoing agricultural heritage, through the expression of winery and orchard-inspired trellises, thereby providing shade as well as expression of unique urban character" (Kelowna 2008d: 7). In contrast to these attempts to include the rural within what is determined as the core or centre of urban form, the ecovillage model presents itself as a more fundamental transition in a centralized urban form itself, and in the suburban form that the urban has generated:

... ecovillage development opportunities arise at the urban-rural fringe where marginally productive land is available for new projects. In the Okanagan region, and elsewhere in North America,

the distinctive landscape character and functionality of the rural fringe is increasingly influenced by conventional subdivisions, gated communities and various types of recreational resorts, which can have many adverse impacts if this growth is not designed and managed sustainably (Avalon: Comprehensive Ecovillage Development Projects).

In other words, this model sees insurmountable problems in both traditional urban and suburban forms, and offers a new vision of how a rural/urban hybrid might take form: “[a]t the campus village, our innovative solar aquatic and dome greenhouses, edible landscaping and organic community gardens will demonstrate how agricultural productivity can flourish amid residential development on marginal lands” (Avalon: Planning and Development Themes). What ties these boundary determinations together, across the distinct spatial and material resolutions proposed, is the shared commitment to altering the condition of communal life through altering the form that urbanization takes. Thus modern and contemporary urbanization are both continually presented as a condition of impossibility for secure community, while the forwarding-casting model of development proposed in each case offers to transform urbanization into a condition of possibility for sustainable community life.

#### *Nature/culture*

The boundary between determinations of rural and urban and their cognates is both tenacious and tenuous, as each of the models makes clear. This is particularly the case with determinations of nature and culture, used by each of the models of development as a means of signalling their commitment to a vision of stable community form that holds rural and urban in proper relation. Thus, promoting its sustainable suburban model, the Village of Kettle Valley boldly states that “[w]hen you combine Kelowna’s perfect weather and incredible natural setting with a well thought-out town plan, beautiful parks and heritage architecture, it’s not hard to see why people move to the Village of Kettle Valley” (Kettle Valley 2004: 4). Here, the weather and natural setting are inviting, but it takes the cultural interventions of the town plan, the parks, and the architecture to make it a desirable community. The sustainable suburban developments depend most concertedly on boundary determinations of nature and culture, through which they characterize their spatial location away from the urban core

and emphasize the distinctive form of community that this location enables. However, proximity to this urban core is still essential, and so “[w]hen [Wilden] developer Gerhard Blenk stood at the highest point in Kelowna, he was awed by the beauty and amazed that such property still existed 10 minutes from downtown. And when he envisioned Wilden ... in the Glenmore Highlands, he saw it being heated and cooled by geothermal energy, by the earth itself” (Freake 2008: n.p.). Wilden promotes its geothermal infrastructure, apparently servicing ninety-five percent of the community, as one of its key commitments to nature; the other commitment comes in the form of approximately half of the development area being left in its ‘natural’ state. While this ‘natural’ preservation is described as occurring “...partly by default because some steep grades were unsuitable for lots or wetlands were preserved” (Bernard 2012: n.p.), it is also continually emphasized throughout the Wilden material that it is a unique development feature made possible only through a spectacular act of ‘visioning’ by Blenk himself. In the downtown densification model, it is not surprising to see the emphasis shift from determinations of nature to determinations of culture. So, while the development guidelines for the CD 21 Zone suggest that “[a]ppropriate architectural responses to the natural landscape are critical to achieving a sense of place,” the guidelines state that “[e]qually as important to a region’s identity is its cultural landscape, i.e. the *patterns and textures* of a community that accrue over time, including events and personalities, land uses, cultural traditions, and built forms” (Kelowna 2008d: 7; emphasis added). As well as articulating the boundaries of urbanization in terms of nature and culture, these development guidelines also offer the reminder of the way that patterns and textures function as a core element of the form of community.

### *Indoor/outdoor*

The boundaries between rural and urban, nature and culture, have increasingly come to be figured also through the delineation of a boundary between indoor and outdoor. In a most basic sense, the boundary captures a spatial relation of proximity or distance, such as when residents of Wilden exclaim “[w]e love the easy access to trails and nature in Wilden. Our favourite activity is to jump on our mountain bikes right from our front door” (Wilden: Parks, Trails and Activities). However, in other contexts, the indoor/outdoor boundary is a means of reformulating more traditional, modern accounts

of public and private, which particularly come into play in the comprehensive design guidelines of the CD 21 Zone. This development proposal lists creation of a ‘public realm’ as one of its eleven guiding priorities, and yet focuses much of its attention on the construction of private residential and commercial spaces. The boundary between indoor and outdoor, then, must be made passible by some, but impassible by or impenetrable to others: “[e]ntrances should be easy to identify from the street. Entrances should also present an inviting face to the street, as well as make the act of entering a premise a comfortable and welcoming experience through attention to details such as proportions, materials, texture, and lighting. Visual cues should be used to separate the public realm from the private realm” (Kelowna 2008d: 19). The determined boundary between indoor and outdoor also operates increasingly at a micro-scale to help define the form of urban life and urban architecture that is most appropriate in Kelowna. Thus the latest property offerings at the Village of Kettle Valley, offered up for sale late in 2014, highlight that the earlier emphasis on ‘heritage’ architectural styles (neo-Colonial, Arts and Crafts) is being broadened to include, among others, a newly defined Okanagan Transitional architectural style. The name is a direct reference to the form of indoor/outdoor living that is made possible by the climate here and made desirable by the landscape; rather than living out your private life indoors, the perimeter of the house operates as a transitional zone, able to open to the outdoors during the summer to allow for the extension of private life into the public. In copy that intimates its target demographic as those who will find stairs an impediment, prospective buyers are invited to “[i]magine, “Main floor living” in an open floor plan concept that combines both your indoor and outdoor living space to allow you to transition through your home all on one level. Well imagine no more, ‘The Okanagan Transitional Style of Living’ is currently here” (Kettle Valley: Lots and Homes). Thus the indoor/outdoor boundary offers, on the one hand, a window into the metanarratives of transitions and transformations in forms of urbanization and resulting modes of urban life and community; at the same time, it captures the micronarratives of transitions that are marshalled within the pervasive metanarratives.

### *Tradition/modern*

The encapsulation of transition narratives within the boundary determinations – whether transitions at the macro scale, micro scale, or meta scale – leads to the repetition

of seemingly temporal boundaries of tradition and modern. However, this boundary just as effectively operates as a claim to determine the most desirable form of community within the insecurities wrought by the continual transitions and transformations of urbanization. The Village of Kettle Valley asks “[i]s it nostalgia for simpler times that draws you here?” and then offers the answer: “Maybe. But it’s the careful blend of time-honoured values and modern conveniences that make this village so unique. Others will tell you the mix is impossible in today’s world, yet it’s right here before your eyes ... Everything old is new again” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript). In other words, not only can Kettle Valley draw the appropriate boundary to define the traditional against the modern, but it can configure the boundary in such a way that this particular development becomes the condition of possibility for a secure community within the pressures and threats of urban transitions. The CD 21 Zone comprehensive development proposal also suggests that the proper integration of heritage and contemporary forms of development can, ultimately, ensure that the present materializes the vision of stable urban community in a way that can withstand or withdraw from the transformations that urbanization has entailed: “[t]he retention of historic frontages and the existing human scale of Bernard Avenue and Water Street streetscapes is a primary means of shaping the community’s future by reinforcing its past... The [envisioned] public promenades ... seek to engender neighbourhood pedestrian activity that recaptures this area’s intensity prior to construction of the Okanagan Lake Floating Bridge and the arrival of automobile-oriented culture” (Kelowna 2008d: 8). In a final example, the Avalon ecovillage promises to “...incorporate the best of global architecture into the homes and buildings of the campus village, as part of our commitment to promoting cross-cultural peace and understanding. Traditional vernacular building and landscaping styles will be creatively combined with modern needs and green technologies” (Avalon: Planning and Development Themes). Not only can the correct boundary between tradition and modern ensure security within the community, then, but it can also participate in a broader project of securing peace between communities.

### *Local/global*

Within the patterns and textures of boundary practices that these development proposals engage, the repetition of the local/global determination should therefore come

as no surprise. At times, the structure of “the global” mimics dominant boundary determinations, such as in the easy geopolitical classifications that underlie the City of Kelowna’s priority, within its downtown redevelopment projects, to “[e]nhance Kelowna’s identity nationally and internationally and enhance the identity of downtown as Kelowna’s Principle Centre” (Kelowna 2012: 53). Similarly, Kelowna’s position in relation to other non-local communities is used to both reinforce the boundary of the “local” while simultaneously suggesting how difficult such determinations are to hold stable in the era of contemporary urbanization. Thus, the Village of Kettle Valley identifies itself as appealing to “... a wider variety of families and people [who] are looking to call our community home, including empty-nesters, professionals, and those who are commuting to Alberta or Vancouver for work” (Kettle Valley: A Brief History). As a local community increasingly envisioned as holding a particular place within a complex world, the ability to identify a development as participating in the global community is promoted as a strength. The design firm Ekistics, which created the master plans for both Wilden and Kettle Valley, emphasizes that its “...reputation has been established primarily in Canada and China where numerous award-winning projects have been successfully constructed. ... the firm [has] three offices in Vancouver, Shanghai and Ho Chi Minh and [the President] currently focuses his attention on large-scale resort projects in Asia” (Ekistics: Who We Are). And the Avalon Ecovillage proposal seeks to establish its credibility by advising potential participants and investors that “[t]he project will be linked to thousands of other ecovillages, sustainable settlements and holistic learning centres already established in the world through associations such as the Global Ecovillage Network and United Nations” (Avalon: Planning and Development Themes). This perception of the value of global expertise – the value of a more exacting or nuanced insight into urban form that can come from experiences located in places with at once greater heritage and greater urban credibility – forms the undercurrent of the description of the Wilden developer’s achievements, as articulated by Ekistics partner Paul Fenske: “Gerhard really applied his European sensibility to [Wilden]. In Europe, this would have been the best place to live: you’re up high off the valley floor, cool winds, big views and you’re in the midst of nature. He [Blenk] asked: ‘Why has no one ever developed here?’” (Bernard 2012). However, the local/global boundary determination also functions here in

a mode that is curiously non-geographic: it is not the location, the distance or proximity, of Europe that is of primary importance, but rather the ability to inculcate an appropriate sensibility to urban form that can instantiate the appropriate (read: Western, modern) determinations of the operative, definitive boundaries.

*Whiteness/otherness:: homogeneity/heterogeneity*

It is crucial to pause and recall that these development proposals, despite their agglomeration into three distinct models of urbanization, are operating within the possibilities and constraints of consistent practices of differentiation from each other, promotion to the public, and idealization of their offering. Whether taking the form of development guidelines enshrined in bylaw but aimed at developer applicants, or of sleek, image-driven sales websites, or of detailed visions and business cases directed at potential investors, the material through which these development proposals project their boundary determinations is structured around sales, and thus aims to operate as much through affect as through rationality. To a greater or lesser extent, all these developments appeal to a certain sense of “community” that emphasizes familiarity and similarity. Given Kelowna’s demographic anomaly of disproportionate whiteness (Aguiar et al. 2005; Aguilar and Martin 2011), this familiarity is coded, in subtle and not so subtle terms, as people just like you, people you can trust (BGLC: History). Therefore, analyses of the delineation, repetition, and reconfiguration of the perpetually determinative boundaries of urban form cannot proceed without also recognizing how, in Kelowna, the boundaries of whiteness and otherness, and of homogeneity and heterogeneity, are intricately bound with rural and urban, nature and culture, indoor and outdoor, public and private, tradition and modern, local and global. The idealized heritage of Kelowna as an envisioned orcharding oasis, which forms a foundational imaginary which all of the proposed developments draw on, brings with it its attendant imaginaries of pure, moral *white* community. And in the context of Kelowna’s settler-colonial origins, which envisioned the possibility of becoming not just any big, chaotic, perpetually threatened city, but “the right kind of city,” the continual focus on community, and the frequent distinction drawn between “community” and “visitors,” participates in and perpetuates a mythology of unified and unitary place that owes as much to nationalist imaginaries as it does to dreams of an ideal city.

An integral aspect of this nationalist-enabled mythology of unified place is the generalized inability to come to terms with the colonial imposition of Kelowna on the unceded territories of the Syilx people. The generalized absence of any place for the Syilx people and their claims to the land of the valley within competing claims about the possible, necessary, and impossible form of urbanization in Kelowna is highlighted by the stark transition in the Avalon Alliance Group website. In an early iteration of the website, first reviewed in 2009, the usual pattern holds, whereby there is simply no mention of past and present colonial relations with the Okanagan First Nations; yet, in the version of the website current in 2015, the Okanagan First Nations receive prominent recognition and offers of consultation that, if limited, are still radically new for the region: “[w]e will also invite the participation of Westbank First Nations whose ancestors and people consider the canyon area lands, fish and wildlife sacred. Westbank First Nations has their own future community development interests in the area that may be compatible with Avalon's Sustainability District vision” (Avalon: Planning and Development Themes). This one indication of the pressing need to acknowledge and undo the ongoing effects of Kelowna’s colonial history help establish the contours of a significant gap in the proposed models of Kelowna’s urbanization, which proceed as though the standard accounts of Kelowna’s settlement and development are the only possible accounts, and which maintain core elements of this restrictive account – settlement as progress, community as unity, city as emplacement of the good life – as foundations for their visions of sustainable urban form. While the least explicit, this set of boundary determinations between whiteness and otherness, homogeneity and heterogeneity, are particularly intransigent, and they produce some of the most palpable effects for anybody located on the wrong side of the boundaries of community that these seek to establish.

None of these boundaries, of course, exist as such, even though they pervade the Official Community Plan, and similarly pervade specific development proposals. And, just as many have argued, these boundaries do not necessarily offer a viable empirical account of contemporary urbanization. None-the-less, their continual repetition, even if only through imaginaries and representations of these imaginaries, produces patterns of

effects on the ways urbanization moves, mutates, and materializes. Yet being pervasive across a multiplicity of sites through which Kelowna's urbanization is debated and planned does not mean that these boundaries are constituted through consistent, singular, or unitary configurations across these sites. The spatiotemporal configuration of boundaries can appear central, but only when it is centred and intensified through kaleidoscopic practices of analysis. When focus shifts to the configuration of boundaries in terms of form, what emerges is the centrality of ontological claims about urbanization...at least temporarily, until a different configuration is centralized and intensified.

### **Community boundaries as ontological productions**

#### *Proper urban form*

When representations of these different development proposals and projects are brought into focus, it becomes possible to see that their distinct spatiotemporal 'location' within Kelowna is at the heart of their claim to offer a viable form of sustainable urbanization: the suburb, the densified core, and the ecovillage locate their own value emphatically in having emplaced themselves in the most appropriate, most promising, most desirable geographical location. Yet what emerges from a careful reading are patterns within all six developments of using the same language, of the need to find the same forms of 'balance,' which displace the claim to evident uniqueness based on geographical location. The possible sustainability of each development is partially framed in spatiotemporal terms, but the possibility is dependent on more than building in the right place at the right time. The question of what, where, how, and when to build encapsulates a network of concerns about the possibilities of urban development to express or materialize what are perceived as the proper, necessary forms for sustainability, understood not simply as the three-pronged social, economic, and ecological sustainability, but as a secure community that can withstand threats of change and decline. The Downtown Comprehensive Development Zone describes its design guidelines as "laying out the intentions for the built form of this area" (Kelowna 2008d: 5), with the emphasis on the "spatial relationships" and "functional impacts" of the proposed buildings and designated "public" spaces. Yet if the spatiotemporality highlighted within the OCP draws attention to literal and figurative emplacements and

displacements effected by boundary determinations, what emerges from reading these model developments is a vision promoted of the possibility of emplacing and displacing different conditions of community, and thus of different possible modes of *being* in the urban world in contemporary times. So, for example, when the Village of Kettle Valley imagines that residents are “always surprised at how they’ve managed to fit a modern floor plan into this heritage-style frame...” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript), the architectural challenge is synecdochic of the more comprehensive challenge of allowing for contemporary modes of urban life while materially housing these activities in structures to bring assumptions of permanence and stability. This challenge of using architecture and built form to materialize a desired form of communal urban life emerges again and again. Thus the proposed “tower forms” of the CD 21 Zone need to embody “their prominent identity in the regional landscape...building tops should be integral elements of the overall building form and expression. They should be conceived as ‘peaks of livability’ rather than ‘top hats’... The intent is for the architecture to express a slender verticality” (Kelowna 2008d: 13), as verticality is the solution to the horizontal spread of the suburbs. And similarly, in considering the possible development vision for the Central Green space, initial consultations asked the community to evaluate four architecturally distinct “concepts,” labeled City Block, Tower and Podium, Uniform Density, and Organic Concept. The public documentation stresses that “[t]he four concepts have different qualities, but all include a strong focus on sustainability” (Kelowna 2008b: 2). Despite the shared commitment to sustainability, these concepts offer different forms of future city for residents to debate, from the highly structured and spatially ordered form of the city block to the “free-form concept” of the organic concept (Kelowna 2008b: 2). In the end, residents preferred a mix of the Tower and Podium concept and the Organic Concept, which provided the vision from which planning and design principles were further developed.

*Form as material/form as model*

On the BlueGreen Living Community Facebook page, a post titled “The Conceptual, the Practical, and the In-Between” draws explicit attention to the way urban planning, architecture, and design not only builds structures and spaces, but also attempts to build modes of life and community:

As we push forward to the next generation of sustainable design, it begs the question of what form this new architecture will take. There is certainly a motivating force to distance ourselves from the traditional model of high rise design but are designers willing to let that drive them in a new direction? If one were to sift through contemporary design concepts for the future of urban living it quickly becomes apparent that designers are tackling this issue head on (BGLC: Facebook June 29).

The “models” of architectural forms that are presented, and at times materialized (if never exactly), act in part as models of how people might live together: live differently, live better, and thus become different and become better. Thus debates over architectural or spatial ‘form’ are simultaneously debates over and contested materializations of presumptions about communal ‘being’ and ‘becoming.’ It is this slip between a model of material form and a model of community form that underlies Kettle Valley’s claims that “[c]omprehensive zoning and customized streetscape standards, as well as... detailed landscaping and architectural design codes were formulated to shape the development of a close-knit neighbourhood that possesses the form and character of a traditional town” (Ekistics: Kettle Valley). This slip suggests the belief that the *being* of community – the ontology of community – has a given form, or model, but that material must continually be shaped accordingly: the material of the urban must be formed through a process of *becoming like* the ontology of the urban. Here, material form, or substantive spatial content, is used to make desired or appropriate social and political forms emerge. This is not a new perception of the significance of urban design and architecture. Rather, it repeats, with new patterns and textures, well-known efforts to use urban and residential form to solve or mitigate perceived social, economic, cultural, and political problems. The description of the Craftsman architectural form in a Kettle Valley promotional newsletter makes this effort clear: “[t]he Craftsman style was first inspired by the English 19th century Arts and Crafts movement ... A response to industrialization’s failure to provide quality goods and decent environments for working people, the Craftsman culture encouraged simple, honest design with respect for quality workmanship and the integrity of materials employed” (Kettle Valley 2004: 2). Just as modern industrialization’s failures could be reconstructed through the correct form of well-crafted

house, contemporary urbanization's failures should be met with appropriate, if not terribly innovative, material forms.

The boundary practices that run through these development projects and proposals therefore attempt to make determinations about the relation between form as substance and form as model. They participate in ongoing and long-standing debates about the relation between the substantive, ontic, or material dimensions of life and claims about ontology as the foundation or condition of possibility for being, whether figured as unchanging, becoming, immanent, emergent, or transcendent. On the one hand, then, geographic debates over the city as a spatially distinct place, even if understood in contemporary terms as a node in network, versus the city as a process rather than a bounded location, even if understood as a planetary process that leaves a non-urban other or outside, are now reflected as a debate between stable ontologies of Being versus emergent ontologies of Becoming. On the other hand, part of what is determined through these debates, and the practices that they debate, is the viability of a boundary between ontic and ontological, a boundary solid enough that it can act as a refractory device, as though there were two distinct media. Thus dual patterns of reflection and refraction emerge, as claims about urban form and forms of urbanization pass from claims about the material and ontic to claims about the ontological. And yet the structure of these debates also assumes the possibility of the ontological, or, more precisely, the debates over the *ontological form* of the urban, and urbanization, assume the inviolability of the boundary between the ontic – the materialized, the spatialized – and the ontological, while rarely engaging the terms and effects of this boundary. Eventually, by following the patterns projected by attempts to delineate this boundary between ontology and other configurations, and attempts to label this boundary as ontological in and of itself, it will become possible to deliberate over the contours of the gap: to trace the diffractions of the patterns and their effects. However, it is first necessary to trace how this claim extends itself, from claims about the form or conditions of possibility of the urban, to claims that the form of the urban or the rural can legitimately encompass claims about material and social life, and therefore claims about the possible, necessary, and impossible forms of community. Reading the promotions of these development proposals effects a return,

then, to problems of community, authenticity, and the good life, problems now framed as political not in spatiotemporal terms but in ontological terms.

*Living together: the heart of the community*

The OCP suggested that claims to the ‘heart’ of the city are used to locate a spatial and temporal centre in which the momentum of urbanization manifests first, and from which the momentum of urbanization emanates to exterior or distant regions. In the models of development that are promoted, claims to the heart of the city vary in spatiotemporal terms, but follow remarkably consistent patterns in the forms of community they seek to configure. The downtown densification model most closely reflects the alignment of a geographic heart to a formal or ontological heart. In the case of Kelowna, this heart has been weakened by outward growth of commercial and residential zones, and so the downtown densification projects focus on “recreating the heart of our city,” as a presentation to the Chamber of Commerce introduced the CD 21 Zone project (Kelowna 2008e: 2). The pages elaborate how “[t]he City feels that the most westerly portion of our downtown is such a vitally important area that it should function as the heart of our city. We need to guide and nurture its redevelopment and be clear about what our community wants in order to ensure a healthy future for this area” (Kelowna: Downtown Development).<sup>58</sup> From this perspective, the geographic centrality of Bernard Avenue and Central Green justifies the designation of the ‘heart’ of the community, but it cannot, by itself, ensure its vitality. What is needed for a ‘healthy future’ for the city is a decision to intervene and to structure the built environment in a form that can ensure the desired community form. For the other development models, it is not always possible to base claims to be the heart of the city on geographic centrality, and so the heart itself is reconfigured. For example, the Village of Kettle Valley highlights that it is “... located in the Upper Mission area of Kelowna, the heart of the spectacular Okanagan Valley” (Kettle Valley: Location); by stretching the relevant geographic boundaries, it becomes possible to claim to be the ‘heart’ of the entire valley, and thus to be the most alive, the most vital community. Residents and prospective buyers in Kettle Valley are invoked to

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<sup>58</sup> This statement used to introduce the CD21 planning process on the City of Kelowna website. The web pages are no longer available online. Hard copies available on request. All references citing Kelowna: Downtown Development are to this out-dated version of the City website.

“Live Different,” with the promise that “Kettle Valley has the right combination, and everyone in the community knows it by heart” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript). Another technique, used particularly by Wilden and Kettle Valley as a feature of their Master Plans, is to focus on the constitution of a centre within the community. Thus Ekistics, the planners for both communities, state that “[f]ollowing traditional village planning principles, the Village Centre is the focus where civic, cultural, economic and recreational activities occur” (Ekistics: Wilden/a), a vision which replicates the desire for a centralized heart. Even though the “living community” focus of BlueGreen Living Community is intended as a critique of the atomizing, anonymous, and dispersive tendencies of traditional developments in both suburbs and city centres, the language of ‘living’ communities and the promise of centralized common spaces participate in the focus on vitality that ‘heart’ bequeaths. Further, BGLC suggests that “the best way to make neighbourhoods that work” (BGLC: Living Communities) is to reconfigure the centralization of the heart of the community, such that the heart now takes the form of a self-decided body of residents that design and build, at the outset together, “a supportive, friendly community where you know and trust your neighbours” (BGLC: History).

### *Community, authenticity, authority II*

Claims to be the heart of a community are insufficient to ensure vitality, as the downtown core of Kelowna has consistently experienced during its decades of revitalization projects. Rather, it becomes necessary to make the heart come alive and stay alive through performances of authenticity: in this consistent pattern, only when a community is believed to be authentic does it achieve the vitality it seeks. Ekistics emphasizes that through its planning methods, used in Wilden and Kettle Valley, “... we have discovered and amplified the distinctive characteristics and opportunities of place” (Ekistics: What We Do). The company elaborates how, “[t]hrough an extensive public consultation with residents, stakeholder groups, the Client and City, the designs worked with principles of environmental-driven design to create a livable community that integrates the site’s significant natural features in a way reflective of an authentic sense of place” (Ekistics: Wilden/b). This link between authenticity and vital community form appears repeatedly. In the most recent development plans for the downtown core, just as

in earlier proposals and projects, authenticity is pursued as a means of securing the vitality of the community, now within the context of an urbanizing world: “It is intended that the subject area convey a strong sense of authenticity, meaning that the form and character of buildings and spaces convey a sense of that which is distinctive to Kelowna and the Central Okanagan” (Kelowna 2008d: 7). Yet in the progressivist narrative of problem and solution that the three models of development can be used to create, the suburban and urban forms of community are marked not by authenticity but by tensions between density and dispersion, anonymity and lack of privacy, difference and homogeneity. These tensions are supposed to generate desires for solutions in the form of more “intentional” forms of community:

Can you imagine living in a supportive, friendly community where you know and trust your neighbours? A community where the needs of people rather than cars prevail? A place that you can feel secure in the knowledge that your neighbours care about you and your property? Where you know that whatever your interests...there is someone nearby with whom you can share your enthusiasms? We call such neighbourhoods living communities (BGLC: History).

Despite their different visions of the form of authentic urban community, and how it is to be materialized, each of the models shares the commitment to locating the stability of the community simultaneously within its claims to authenticity and within the developers’ claims to be able to manifest this authenticity, through their plans, into the built form of the community.

These proposals, therefore, may differ in the built form that they advocate, and the spatial position of their respective developments within the city boundaries, but they share a claim about the nature of urbanization as a process that can be guided and managed by relevant authorities, now understood not as the authority of the municipal government guiding the OCP, but more broadly as the figures who can produce the necessary plans and development guidelines, utilizing a combination of local knowledge and global sophistication. In other words, these proposals and projects forward an ontological claim about urbanization, namely, that it is located in the possibility of a controlled transition from form as model to form as material. Even as each proposal highlights its expertise, though, it must also negate the work involved: the claim about

community as ontology brings with it an assumption not just of possibility but necessity, something that is not subject to the whims, inconsistencies or errors of human activity and material manifestations, but rather deeply rooted in the nature of the world. And so Wilden intones, with ontological certainty, that “[c]ommunity is in our nature” (Wilden: Parks, Trails and Activities). As hinted by the prevalence of the language of authenticity, heart, vitality, and soul as means of defining the seemingly ineffable but ontologically necessary elements of community, this vision of community continually brings to life dominant modern conceptions of political community: as BGLC promises, “[our] communities offer the potential to realize sustainability goals while still living the good life” (BGLC: Our Values). The distinction between proposals that get built (proposals that take on a material presence in the world) and those that do not (proposals that remain ‘merely’ models of possible urban forms), in this line of focus, is less significant than their shared practice in establishing the boundaries of an appropriate ontology of urbanization.

Further, the return to invocations of the good life repeat the pattern of transitioning implicitly from claims about the possibilities and limits of community within urbanization to claims about *political* community. While particular features of the built community and even the model of the community differ, the desirability of sustainable community as a basis for or route to making claims about stable politics remains remarkably consistent. This undercurrent, whereby debates about materializing community with and against the contemporary momentum of urbanization house implicit debates about the possible forms and values of political community in a rapidly changing world, occasionally becomes explicit. For example, while the promise of BlueGreen Living Communities, featured prominently on their website, is to provide people with “the community that realizes your hopes and dreams” (BGLC: The Story), BlueGreen Living Communities also refers to the initial development planning process as the creation of a “living charter” (KDN 2013: n.p.). At a public presentation at the Kelowna Art Gallery in December 2011, Emmanuel Lavoie, then Vice-President of Projects at BGLC, called their approach to cohousing a ‘new social contract.’ This approach promises the possibility of “know[ing] your neighbours before you move in”, and offers to work with you “to develop good neighbourly relations prior to moving in” (BGLC:

Home). Here, the dream of a social contract becomes a reality: you really can come together with a group of individuals and decide, in advance of living together, how the community is to be structured, and how it is to be governed over time. Against the displacements of authenticity that they see operating in contemporary urban life, BlueGreen Living Community promises to re-empower residents within a sustainable and secure community. This community is political in explicit, if limited, terms, with its evocation of an originary moment that creates citizen-subjects capable of authorizing, legislating, and securing the good life for themselves: governed by consensus decision-making, in both its planning and maintenance (BGLC: Financial Sustainability), and thus ensuring that everyone is involved in creating the decisions (legislations) to which they will be subject.

BlueGreen Living Communities reflects the politicization of the search for community within contemporary urbanization in stronger terms than usual, such as through their claim to be “democratizing the development process,” by which they mean allowing residents to participate in the planning, the operation/authorization, and the “profits and upswing of the development game” (BGLC: Facebook December 4). This is not a redirection or reconfiguration of the assumptions about political community that operate in each of the models; instead, it is an amplification of these assumptions. This amplification suggests that the claim about the ontology of urbanization that unites these examples – that the nature of urbanization is defined as the possibility of being subjected to a process of transition from form as model to form as material – also resonate as a claim about the ontology of politics. Despite proposing, and at times building, different material forms, the pattern of repetitions within and between the development models is made possible through an ontological commitment to a decision-making authority that can envision, guide, and control the materializing of form into substance. Even the promise of a ‘democratized’ development process still depends, after all, on the ontology of authority assumed by this mode of urban “planning.” Indeed, the intentional community model transitions the process of master planning into a vision of pre-established unity to avert the insecurity that threatens the vitality of urban and suburban communities, despite being extensively, even exhaustively, planned. In each case, though, the ontology of political community makes it possible, and certainly necessary,

for authority to work through appropriate techniques of planning to decide what counts as authentic community and what does not, and to decide who counts as part of the community and who does not: to embody the role of the sovereign, presumed to be increasingly absent in the rush of contemporary global urbanization.

*Planning the impossible*

When the focus is held intently on claims about the forms that urban developments can take, it becomes possible to see how these proposals and projects function both as claims about the material forms of urban community and as claims about the conditions under which possible urban forms become actual. The claims put forward in Kelowna follow the typical boundaries of urbanization – rural/urban, nature/culture, local/global, traditional/modern, and so on – and repeat them, layer them, until they operate in stereo. And so, Kelowna develops, materially and figuratively, according to the stereo-typical boundaries of urbanization. Through the processes whereby these boundaries of urbanization are transitioned from the figurative to the material, a consistent pattern of claims emerges about the ontology of urban community as an ontology of political community. The promise that these proposals offer is not simply an authentic, sustainable community – a community with soul; a community that can outlast the death of individual members – but an authentic and secure political community.

Nevertheless, this shared sense of urbanization as a transition from form as model to form as substance, and thus this commitment to an ontology of urbanization as a materialization of the ontological within the ontic, presents itself as impossible. It is riddled with gaps, evasions, failures. Most obviously, a gap appears in the space between the form of the plans and the final built, material form: it takes very little hunting to find examples that confirm that the plans are never quite what is built, that unexpected requirements and emergent conditions require transitions and transformations that were never planned in advance. Evidently, it would be impossible to continually build exactly what is envisioned in development guidelines and master plans. Yet, by focusing on development proposals regardless of their successful approval and completion, it also becomes possible to witness the impossibility of knowing for certain, in advance, which proposals will proceed and which will falter. Clearly, many proposed plans never get off the page, and never even have the chance to become existent in material form, to be fully

substantive in the world. They remain stalled in the platonic definition of form, regardless of time, energy, resources, and extensive attempts to exercise planning authority. Despite this insecurity, the plans keep coming: developers and planners and dreamers keep envisioning the next urban project, and keep promoting it as the community that will finally offer security within the rapidly changing conditions of urban life. Crucially, the plans keep outlining their promises according to the same sets of vestigial urban boundaries that contemporary urbanization is supposed to eradicate or evolve beyond. The problem of boundaries in Kelowna, then, takes the stereotypical form.

The problem of boundaries in Kelowna also manifests a more peculiar form, namely claims about the proper form of boundaries themselves. The boundaries at stake are not solely spatiotemporal, despite the stereo effects that amplify each of these binary pairs in geographical and historical terms; rather, these boundaries function as techniques, strategies, or practices that are used in attempts to give form to claims about the development of urban form, and that offer the possibility of making claims about the conditions of possibility of urbanization. In other words, the boundary claims an ontological function, and the boundary becomes understood, in and of itself, as an ontological feature. And this repeated ontological claim about the possibility of the boundary to secure political community, despite the manifest fragility, even impossibility, of materializing any such boundaries within any given urban community, generates a distinctive, and non-linear, dynamic to urbanization. This dynamic energizes the drive to propose another urban plan as a solution to the problems of political community. It is the dynamic of the aporetic logic, this time as a logic for how promises of ontology function both to secure political community and render it insecure.

### **The ontological dis/function of aporetic boundaries**

#### *Aporetic ontology as possibility, necessity, and impossibility*

The aporia is brought into being by a boundary practice, a tracing that establishes a border, constitutes entities on either side of the border, and generates the desire to reconcile these entities. As already seen, the spatiotemporal instability of the aporetic boundary means that the entities on either side are perpetually, necessarily threatened with impossibility. However, the distinctive spatiotemporal configuration of the aporia –

a temporal practice of delimitation and bounding; a spatial hiatus that must but cannot be traversed; a temporal hiatus as one pauses at the moment of impossibility; a movement out towards a more secure endpoint and a cycling back to the aporetic hiatus – points to the inherent instability of the aporetic boundary. By functioning as the possibility, necessity, and impossibility of these entities, aporetic boundary practices both enable and threaten what they create. This insecurity generates the condition whereby the ontological foundations for entities are under constant threat, and thus hints at the impossibility of ontological certainty that the aporia produces. As Derrida recognizes, “there is a problem as soon as the edge-line is threatened. And it is threatened from its first tracing” (1993: 11). Not only does an aporetic boundary represent, for Derrida (1993: 8), “the difficult or the impracticable, here the impossible, passage” between the constituted entities; more importantly, now, the boundary itself is uncertain, unreliable, and continually, constitutively threatened. It is impossible to identify an aporetic boundary as existing “as such,” independent of the practices that delineate and undermine it, but only ever as a series of effects that can be traced and engaged. The aporia is a site of the undecidable: it posits an ontological foundation as necessary for security, and both eminently and immanently possible, yet even as a decision is taken, the decision is shown to be impossible.

An aporetic boundary, therefore, cannot have ontological status, and neither can the entities – material, discursive, conceptual – that it constitutes. Despite attempts to give form to appropriately bounded entities such as rural or urban, and through these give form to seemingly less binary formulations such as subjectivity or community, the constitutive instability of the aporetic boundary generates attempts to stabilize and resecure what is threatened by appealing to the possibility for a new, more stable ontology. The aporetic logic, in other words, makes ontological claims about urbanization seem possible, as the boundary takes the form of the condition of possibility for identifying urbanization as transitions across boundaries; it makes the boundary necessary, for it is through this transition that urbanization can be identified; and it makes the boundary impossible, not only because the transition is perceived as destabilizing or surpassing the boundary, but because this instability undermines *the boundary itself* as a condition of possibility for urbanization as transition. In order to affirm the ontological

basis of urbanization, then, it becomes continually necessary to decide, again, on the operative boundaries through which urbanization becomes possible; and yet, any such decision creates the conditions of its own impossibility, ensuring the instability that the decision is meant to eradicate. This dynamic creates the distinctive pattern of generating new proposals for forms of development that can balance or stabilize the operative boundaries, and new proposals for forms of authority that can ensure the materialization of these boundaries, ensuring the ongoing stability of the community via the ontological certainty of boundaries.

As ontological certainty is impossible, in logical and practical terms, these appeals to and idealizations of ontological certainty function as regulative ideas in the Kantian sense: in order to make the ideal of ontological stability actual in the world, a subject must regulate herself as if it were the case, despite the impossibility of knowing whether the content of the ontology, *or the possibility of ontological stability itself*, is true, real, or actual. Understanding the appeals and idealizations of *politically* sustainable cities as regulative ideas highlights the distinctive political theoretical importance of engaging development proposals in the form of model or ideal. The aporia, precisely through the impossibility of ontology that it creates, generates a practice of reconstructing political ontology through the ongoing articulation of regulative ideas: not only of rural/urban, nature/culture, local/global, and so on, but also of authenticity, of authority, and of community, some of modernity's most powerful regulative ideals of politics. More importantly, *aporetic instability and the impossibility of ontological certainty generate the notion of political ontology as a regulative idea in itself*: an idea of the spaces, forms, and practices of politics that are possible if only the political itself can be constituted with the certainty that ontology provides. The regulative idea necessarily requires a renewed relationship between the entities on either side of the aporetic boundary, and as long as we can regulate ourselves according to this idea, we have the possibility of enjoying the stability that political ontology would bring. However, as the impassable hiatus between terms, as the hiatus within the practice of surpassing and returning, this reconciliation is impossible to sustain, simultaneously generating the search for a new ontology, confirming the impossibility of ontological stability, and re-introducing the regulative idea of politics as ontological.

The aporetic logic draws attention to the boundaries that attempt to define politics and its ontological limits. These limits are experienced as multiple, overlapping at times and diverging at others: the limits of ontologies of urbanization; the limits of ontologies of politics; and the limits of ontologies of subjectivity as modern, self-governing individuals. It draws attention to the points of reinforcement, whereby the modern state is sustained by the modern city and the form of modern individual that can regulate herself to live in conditions of density and difference (Freud 2004). And it draws attention to the inevitable insecurities, whereby the modern state is inherently threatened by the dynamic forces of urbanization and the masses of people who inhabit uncontrolled, burgeoning cities. The regulative ideal of appropriate urbanization is therefore linked in powerful, if not always consistent, terms to the regulative ideal of authority as subjectivity: the ideal of the self who can regulate the self, not only according to the ideal of sustainable city, but the ideal of the regulative and regulated self.

*The plan, the model, and the (regulative) ideal form*

Urbanization, understood as a complex of claims and practices that produce aporetic boundaries between rural and urban, nature and culture, apolitical and political constitution, promises to secure against the inherent insecurities of aporetic boundaries by proposing, and proposing to materialize, a renewed ideal of community located in balance or unity. In Kelowna, the encounter with the ontological uncertainty of aporetic urbanization produces the sustainable city ideal, the image of a city that strikes a renewed balance between nature and culture, rural and urban. The spatiotemporal configurations of this balance are framed within the OCP and continue to resonate within particular development proposals. The desired balance can also be framed as an empirical configuration, whereby the ideal focuses on ecological sustainability as a biophysical problem of ‘the world,’ or as a phenomenological configuration, whereby the problem is cast as the need for the experience of a stable, inclusive community and a sustainable lifestyle; these configurations of the political problem of urbanization will be followed in subsequent sections. But here, following the political problem framed as an ontological configuration, the ideal of the world-class sustainable city casts the problem as the need to draw boundaries that cannot fail and determine limits that will not be crossed. The word itself – *sustain* – emphasizes a desire for enduring boundaries that will carry an

ontological stability in space and over time, boundaries that will hold up and that can be held up as true.<sup>59</sup> This dream of ontological sustainability is reflected by the Village of Kettle Valley, which promises that “[h]ere, time is suspended and savoured. Captured in architecture and values that echo the past, prolonged in a town plan that hallmarks the future” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript). Architecture and town plans provide a means of materializing, and therefore securing, the values that make ontologically stable community possible. As a prospective resident, you are invited to located yourself in “your home, for a lifetime: When you imagine your dream home, do you envision spending the rest of your life there? Imagine that, the ability to transition through your life growing older in your home without having to worry about some of the physical challenges growing old sometimes presents us with” (Kettle Valley: Lots and Homes). Here and elsewhere, the model of sustainable community is sold as the best possibility of dealing with one of the primary threats to stable political community and the authority of political subjects, namely the finitude of the human condition, the inevitability of death. Yet the aporetic dynamic of decision immediately invokes impossibility, as insecurity cannot be secured any more than death can be avoided. The best we can do, suggests the model of sustainable urbanization, is to regulate our communities and ourselves *as if* this security were possible, and thus to embody and materialize its possibilities, *as if* the ideal of the authority of the self were any more secure than the ideal of communal authority.

The three seemingly distinct and competitive models of sustainable urbanization in Kelowna, when read together, reflect how the aporetic logic that is continually materialized according to a regulative idea of the sustainable city, envisioned as a restructured relationship between not only rural and urban, but also the cognate boundaries that have defined modern urbanization and contextualized it within modern politics. The development plans, and the models of sustainable community that these plans are meant to guide into material existence, are a key element in the regulative structure of these models, providing the authorized vision that is the focus of personal

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<sup>59</sup> From Old French *sustenir* (late 13<sup>th</sup> century) "hold up, endure," from Latin *sustinere* "hold up, support, endure," from *sub-* "up from below" + *tenere* "to hold."

(<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=sustain>)

See also *tenet*: principle/I hold (something to be true), from *tenere/teneo* (present participle): I hold, to have; I restrain; I know, grasp, understand

([http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=tenet&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=tenet&searchmode=none)).

and communal work: “[t]he unique character of Kettle Valley is defined and maintained using strict architectural guidelines that work to capture the qualities and images of a historic town while maintaining the convenience of modern-day standards. The result is a visually striking yet functional community” (Kettle Valley 2006: n.p.). The political presumption within this model is that, with sufficient planning authority, the model can indeed be fully materialized, and recognized by members of the community and by outsiders as a comprehensive, successful, secure community.

In the search for a form of sustainable community that can secure against isolation, separation, and death itself, Avalon makes explicit the connection between the ideal of sustainability and the desire to surpass the boundary between immanence and transcendence. Indeed, Avalon explains its choice of name as “the place where Heaven meets Earth, the equivalent of Shambala, the New Jerusalem, or what other cultural traditions have called the enlightened society” (Avalon 2009). Further, they promise to “[a]pply green, sacred and world heritage design principles in the creation of campus village buildings and landscapes, creating a ‘heaven on earth’ experience for residents and visitors” (Avalon: Project Vision, Mission and Goals). While Avalon may appear as a fringe development, both geographically and culturally, the same vision of making heaven a reality runs through the other proposals. For the Village of Kettle Valley, it takes the form of the Oasis, that dream of Kelowna as the perfect community at the edge of the world: “at the end of the winding Kelowna road, above the orchards and vineyards, amid the mountain forest, an oasis appears: the Village of Kettle Valley. For you, the gateway always holds that magical feeling, the awe you experienced when you first saw this perfect hamlet of heritage-style homes nestled on a hillside, overlooking Okanagan Lake” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript). Oasis, magical, perfect, awe: these are the hallmarks of the sublime, of an encounter with the transcendent. But just as a mirage shimmers in the distance only to reveal itself as dust when approached, and continually reappear at a greater distance, the vision of Kelowna as Oasis continually projects into a future or recedes into the past. It appears as eminently and immanently possible, and as necessary if the present is to be as bright and desirable as envisioned, but it does not materialize in the present despite pervasive attempts.

*Balancing acts and transition narratives*

Urbanization, understood as a complex of claims and practices that produce aporetic boundaries between rural and urban, nature and culture, apolitical and political constitution, promises to secure against the inherent insecurities of aporetic boundaries by proposing, and proposing to materialize, a renewed ideal of community. In Kelowna, as in many places, the encounter with the uncertainty of aporetic urbanization produces the sustainable city ideal, the image of a city that strikes a renewed balance between the boundaries that are perceived to be points of tension or dissolution. The OCP articulates this balance primarily as a problem/solution of spatiotemporal configurations, and this narrative continues to resonate within particular development proposals. The three seemingly distinct and competitive models of sustainable urbanization in Kelowna, when read together, reflect how the aporetic logic is continually materialized according to a regulative idea of the sustainable city, envisioned as a restructured relationship between not only rural and urban, but also the cognate boundaries that have defined modern urbanization and contextualized it within modern politics.

Despite the continual attempt to determine the boundaries of rural and urban, nature and culture, homogeneity and heterogeneity, and so on, this ideal of a politically, *ontologically* secure community cannot exist simply on one side of the boundary or the other. Instead, it is structured as both the condition of possibility, and the outcome, of a complex and precarious relationship where the stability of the boundary is identified by the ability of the community to balance seemingly competing tendencies. Thus, in referring to urban versus rural living, and how a city region might plan for the best of both, the BlueGreen Living Communities Facebook page reflects that “[i]t’s a tricky balance to strike: country living holds a lot of appeal for many people, but the very choice of urbanites to move to the country can instigate the kind of strip-mall development that lessens the appeal of the rural context” (BGLC: Facebook February 17). Building on the established parallels between rural/urban and nature/culture as cognate boundaries, Avalon ecovillage promises that “[t]he World Centre and Sustainability District vision provides an optimal and synergistic balance of land uses that creates high value for project stakeholders and society at large” (Avalon: Project Background). Further, extending these boundaries to the boundaries of

spatiotemporality, Wilden invites potential residents to reflect on “[t]he Beauty of Space,” asking

[h]ow do you define balance in a world as busy as ours? It is the serenity that comes from being surrounded by nature and wide-open space. It is the comfort of a home that gives you and your family room to live and grow. It is the convenience of being close enough to the city of Kelowna that your precious time is not wasted commuting (Wilden: Visit Wilden).

Making forms of spatiotemporal balance explicit as a route to subjective and communal political balance, Wilden urges potential residents to “[s]ave your precious time! Living in Wilden means you will never waste time commuting. Wilden is an island of tranquility surrounded by the best the Okanagan has to offer. Everything you need to live, work, study, raise a family, relax, socialize, travel and sustain a well-balanced life is close to home” (Wilden: Location, Maps and Amenities).

The emphasis on balance prioritizes the notion of pre-existing opposites that appropriate forms of urbanization can knit together, and therefore complicates the seemingly singular narrative of urbanization as transition. In other words, the models of development are performing another refraction of the dominant narrative of urbanization as transition, making explicit the multiplicity of narratives of the ontological function of the composite boundaries of urbanization. First, the condition of possibility for urbanization is claimed in its transformative momentum, the ability to move across the boundary that separates rural from urban. Second, the condition of possibility for urbanization is claimed in its capacity to effectively balance the poles that form the limits of its transformative momentum, neither remaining too embedded in the rural, nor developing too chaotically, too quickly. Third, its condition of possibility is claimed in its capacity not just to balance but also to generate the boundaries that define it. However, the final condition of possibility that emerges from the narratives produced by these models – namely the possibility that the momentum of urbanization effectively defines its own limits, and thereby establishes its own ontological security – is effectively destabilized by the specific features of the aporetic logic of boundary practices as limit experiences. By focusing intently, if temporarily, on the ontological claims that these models of development make about urbanization, and through urbanization to political

subjectivity and political community, what becomes apparent is not the geographic, economic, or social limits that define urbanization against other phenomena, but the limit of the ontological certainty that the simultaneously parallel and divergent narratives of transition and balance are supposed to convey. Continually, in the face of this constitutive impossibility of a secure ontology of urbanization, the solutions offered emphasize the void where ontological security is supposed to be found, a void that becomes apparent in the patterns of diffraction created by the reliance on the regulative function, the need to act *as if* the ontological claims were solid, and thus, hopefully, provide them with maximal stability.

#### *Authentic visions and active decisions*

The spatiotemporal element of the attempt to find ontological certainty through balance across the boundaries of transition narratives is fundamental to the regulative structure of the ideal, which is necessarily future-oriented. The regulative structure depends upon the possibility of a universally accepted and secure solution to the problems of urbanization, and posits this perpetual, pervasive solution as a normative requirement that should guide all behaviour. The CD 21 Comprehensive Development Zone guidelines for the downtown core reference their goal for a “Universal Design,” namely that “[a]ll the buildings in this precinct *should* be designed to address the *principles of universal design*” (Kelowna 2008d: 8; emphasis added). This regulative function is repeated by Ekistics, which promises that “[t]hroughout its work EKISTICS has demonstrated an understanding that *future communities ought to be* considered as more efficient, integrated, mixed-use towns and neighbourhoods” (Ekistics: How We Work; emphasis added). The development plans, and the models of sustainable community that these plans are meant to guide into material existence, are a key element in the regulative structure of these models: “[t]he unique character of Kettle Valley is defined and maintained using strict architectural guidelines that work to capture the qualities and images of a historic town while maintaining the convenience of modern-day standards. The result is a visually striking yet functional community (Kettle Valley 2006: n.p.). The political presumption within this model is that, with sufficient planning authority, the ideal can indeed be materialized as fully as possible, and recognized by members of the community and by outsiders as a comprehensive, successful, secure

community. The development proposal, with its combination of concrete plan and idealized product, offers a vision of future community, but also a vision of a regulative process that exceeds the municipal processes that regulate zoning, land use, and development permissions.

Within the regulative ideal of secure community, vulnerability is experienced as the need for order, and planning authority is understood as a route to order that is at once both natural and the result of careful study and intervention. The Village of Kettle Valley claims the capacity to reside within this precarious tension: “[t]here’s a natural balance to life here, an order hidden within the design of each neighbourhood, the character of each home, the landscape of each yard. The atmosphere is calm and comforting, safe and serene - everything you’ve ever wanted for you and your family” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript). The truly authentic community, then, promises to use the authority of the developer to see and materialize the natural order into a sustainable life for you and your family. BlueGreen Living Communities similarly promises to “provide a wonderful balance of privacy and community for people of all ages,” by using its model of professionally-guided community planning as a means of guaranteeing “the community that realizes your hopes and dreams” (BGLC: The Story). The technical language of the master-plan, referenced with pride in many of the models, reflects this underlying commitment not just to a vision of sustainable community but also to a vision of the authority to decide: the authority to instantiate a decision that can remain stable in spatiotemporal and ontological terms. Within this vision of authority, Gerhard Blenk, the developer of Wilden, is praised for his ability to create “...a master plan with long- long-term thinking...so the ups and downs don’t affect him like some of the smaller developments” (Freake 2008: n.p.). Blenk is further lauded as “a man with patient money who is willing to take the time to do it right. While some developers see their time horizon in weeks and months, Blenk’s vision for Wilden could stretch over the next 40 years” (Bernard 2012: n.p.).

In a reflection of dominant accounts of political authority, the origins of the developer’s vision is an essential component of the anticipated ability to materialize this vision effectively and ensure its authenticity, and thereby its stability. Avalon Ecovillage emphasizes that their goal is not simply to develop their land into an intentional

community, but originate a better form of authority in service of this vision: to “[e]stablish a project development and management approach that demonstrates visionary leadership, authenticity, effective teamwork, professional excellence, meaningful work and loving service” (Avalon: Project Vision, Mission and Goals). The origins of authority in accounts of unique vision and insight into the authentic nature of place are, appropriately, conveyed in the autobiographical story of Gerhard Blenk’s first encounter with the land that was to become Wilden.<sup>60</sup>

When I was in my mid-50s, I toured the Okanagan by bicycle. It was an exceptionally hot summer, and one day I got lost and ran out of water. Thankfully a friendly woman near an orchard gave me a smile, directions, and a large glass of apple juice – it was the best I ever had! Years later I recalled this incident with fondness when I got a call from a friend in Alberta telling me about a large parcel of land that was for sale in Kelowna. Curious, I travelled from Germany to check it out and immediately fell in love with the wild, rugged terrain. Buying that land – the first of many acquisitions in the area – was the beginning of a dream. Today the property, which I named Wilden, encompasses over 2,000 acres of prime Kelowna real estate and is being developed into a place where people can live in harmony with nature (Wilden: Your Real Estate Developer).

This origin story makes explicit the essential role that visions of the ideal play in driving urban development – Blenk states that “[t]he first thing I developed was a dream” (Wilden: Your Real Estate Developer) – but the story also clarifies that the ability to envision the ideal is nothing without the authoritative capacity to make the decisions necessary to materialize this vision:

My vision was to create a very livable, friendly little village spread throughout the pristine wilderness, with the least possible impact on nature. To ensure I kept true to my vision and had control over the master plan for the community, I acquired a majority share of the well-known Vancouver company, Ekistics Town Planning. Together we brought my vision to reality, drawing up neighbourhood plans, creating building plots, and submitting

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<sup>60</sup> Authentic: “mid-14c., “authoritative,” from Old French *authentique* (13c., Modern French *authentique*) “authentic; canonical,” and directly from Medieval Latin *authenticus*, from Greek *authentikos* “original, genuine, principal,” from *authentēs* “one acting on one's own authority,” from *autos* “self” (see *auto-*) + *hentes* “doer, being,” from PIE *\*sene-* “to accomplish, achieve.” Sense of “entitled to acceptance as factual” is first recorded mid-14c.” (<http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=authentic>)

development applications to the City of Kelowna (Wilden: Your Real Estate Developer).

This vision of the capacity to decide is subsequently extended from developer to resident, thus becoming a feature not just in origin stories of authority, but also in ontologies of the continuity and stability of political subject and political community:

Spectacular golf, skiing, wine-tasting, boating, and a host of other outdoor activities unfold at your doorstep. For those looking for more leisurely pursuits, a wealth of restaurants, boutiques, theatres, cafes, and galleries provide ample opportunity to pass the time casually....Of course, you can always stay home and spend time with family and friends as you watch the sun rise over the mountains or set over Okanagan Lake....*The choice is yours* (Kettle Valley: About Kelowna; emphasis added).

In this account, successful life in the regulative political community reflects both the appropriate vision of necessary boundaries in balance (the ability to maintain, and maintain access to, both nature and culture, public and private) and the appropriate structure of necessary authority as the capacity to decide these boundaries (“the choice is yours”).

The narrative of unitary authority refracts, therefore, to highlight the complexity and specificity of the authoritative functions of vision and decision. The models continually clarify that effective authority depends on both a strong will and a perceptive vision on the part of a developer to guide a proposal through to completion:

[a] panel of independent judges selected by the CHBA from the construction industry determined that the Village of Kettle Valley was the best community development in Canada in terms of vision, architectural features, environmental considerations, recreation, safety and other quality of life features. ... ‘This is no accident; it is exactly what we envisioned when we set out to create this Neotraditional community nine years ago’ [Mark Flett, Marketing and Communications Manager] explained (Kettle Valley 2005: n.p.).

The problem of the possible disjunction between vision and will is one that Avalon explicitly proposes to solve using the regulative function of the ideal: “[s]ince the early 1940s, visionary scientists and pioneers in all fields have been introducing a holistic view of the universe that recognizes the interconnectedness of all life and the unity of mind,

body and spirit. Many men and women now understand and embrace this new world view and are learning to integrate it into their lives” (Avalon: New Millennium Market Trends). This proposed solution suggests that the threats to developments that cannot secure their boundaries are a result, in part, of attempts to draw boundaries in the wrong ways and in the wrong places. In this view, the unsustainable character of the suburbs, or the densified urban core, is not simply due to a void in the ability of the community to hold its boundaries firm, but to a more significant void in the vision of the appropriate boundaries of the proposed community. Finally, then, these voids produce their own patterns of diffraction that both amplify and attenuate each other: the amplification that necessarily aligns the act of proper vision with the capacity and legitimacy of authority versus the attenuation that makes political security impossible when vision exists without authority or when authority acts without vision.

#### *Ontological instabilities*

The acknowledged exigencies that may interfere with the process of moving from planning to development to residency function to take the complicated patterns of planning authority and vulnerability and refract them again. These models of sustainable urbanization, particularly understood as models that may or may not come to exist as such, refract the narrative of universal security that runs through accounts of community, authenticity, and the good life, and open to view the operation of the regulative ideal within these accounts. But by following the patterns of the insecurity of these models, by giving attention to their vulnerability to exigencies, by focusing on the open fields where these plans fail to materialize, multiple patterns emerge. The repetitions and reconfigurations of regulative ideals of sustainable urbanization refract the unitary narrative of planning authority and begin to reflect, instead, the undecidable structure of modern authority, which both looks to a designated central authority (in this case the municipality) while simultaneously acknowledging that other forms of authority are central to the regulative function. In the hiatus between these two limited visions of authority, the emergent patterns of diffraction clarify the contours of the aporetic logic of politics that simultaneously drives the transition narratives of urbanization (in the form of progress towards a regulative ideal), that drives the continual return back to very modern

structures of authority as balance and order, vision and decision, and that drives the inescapable encounters with the limits of these structures.

While trying to be a source of stability through which ontological claims about urbanization, and about politics, can be made, the plan and its material instantiation will always be threatened, and the forms of these threats are so varied that they cannot be predicted and secured in advance. Some of these threats can be mundane, quotidian matters of shifting finances, shifting municipal authorities, or even shifting tastes: “Brent Couves, Wilden’s sales and marketing manager, says sales have been slower in the past four years but says continuing low interest rates, this year’s resolution of uncertainty over HST and low building costs mean Wilden is well positioned to take advantage of pent-up demand when markets improve” (Bernard 2012: n.p.). The optimism is necessary not only because Wilden was launching another section of the development for sale at this time; rather, the investment made in these communities as a source of stable political ontology means that consciously or not, they must be protected and advanced. Participants in public consultation processes in Kelowna also recognize that, as a place with significant investments in its imaginary as an rural orcharding oasis, plans for new development can falter simply because “[s]ome residents are too resistant to change” (Kelowna 2008a: 2). At times, however, developments can be literally threatened with destruction, as the catastrophic Okanagan Mountain Park Fire proved when it ignited homes across the south-west urban-forest fringe in Kelowna, including the homes within the Village of Kettle Valley. Reflecting on the week of uncontrolled firestorm, the Kettle Valley newsletter describes how

[o]ne of the most seismic events in the history of our community started with a lightning strike near Rattlesnake Island on August 16th, 2003. This sparked the Okanagan Mountain Park Fire and led to the evacuation of some 27,000 residents, including the entire community of Kettle Valley. ... The fire destroyed 239 homes/properties and engulfed more than 250 sq. km, including three homes, two vacant lots, and one of the parks here in our village (Kettle Valley: A Brief History).

Yet, insofar as instability generates the continued need to resecure, the reflection goes on to note that “[w]hile the fire was tragic, it served to further cement the sense of

community in the Village of Kettle Valley as residents and neighbours pulled together to support one another during a frightening time” (Kettle Valley: A Brief History).

These threats and vulnerabilities point to the gaps that plague attempts to develop coherent narratives of urbanization as a continual transition, gaps that diffract these narratives and generate their own patterns of amplification and attenuation of the boundaries of idealization and materialization, of security and insecurity. A most noticeable example is the gap between on-site advertising boards and the pre-development land they seek to define. In the case of Central Green, images of meditating future inhabitants, carefully mixing gendered, aged, and racialized subjects, contrast starkly with the brown field that is the site of the former Kelowna Secondary School building. This site is not devoid of life and use, yet the absence of everything but one heritage oak tree and the confined space of the off-leash dog park marks the site, temporarily at least, as being void of either recognizably ‘rural’ or ‘urban’ form. As the site moves slowly towards development, other gaps emerge, such as the gap between the original prioritization of social and ecological sustainability goals and the final decisions around what forms of development would be financially viable (Kelowna 2009b; Nieoczym 2009). Other proposals generate voids of differing shapes. They become noticeable, for example, in the quiet absence of BlueGreen Living Communities in Kelowna, which shifted focus to possible development opportunities in Kamloops (150 kilometres north), and then seemingly disappeared altogether. The CD 21 Zone, heavily debated and then finally rejected, constitutes the void that has the most recognizable effects. After extensive processes of visioning, planning, consultation and debate, it appeared to fade away, considered a huge loss by some and a huge victory by others. However, the parameters and priorities of the Bernard Avenue Revitalization Project are heavily inflected with the absent CD 21 Zone plan, and the private development of a hotel on the lakeside, the proposal by Westcorp/Milroy that instigated the CD 21 planning process, is set to proceed. Therefore, while at times the inevitable voids are ascribed to the perceived gap between conceptual ideas and pragmatic solutions, between idealized fantasies and the possibilities of material reality, the aporetic logic suggests that these voids diffract the ontological boundaries that configure this interpretation of the

problem (the difficulty of authority with a vision of the ideal to instantiate itself in the world) and the solution (the need for better visions and stronger decisions).

If top-down planning authority cannot secure the boundaries of individual and communal security, then other practices of authorization and decision-making become necessary, often ones that are claimed to be more community-driven, more immanent, more democratic. This gesture towards emergent and participative forms of planning becomes visible, for example, in the use of community charettes, where residents, specialists, and stakeholders work together to establish parameters and details of developments, and in the use of the planning practice known as ‘dot-mocracy’ (Kelowna 2008b), whereby residents are given an opportunity to ‘vote’ on design and planning preferences by affixing sticker dots to various scenarios. The gesture is also made in more explicit terms, which seek to use engagement in the transitions of urbanization as an opportunity to foster engagement in political transitions. BlueGreen Living Communities participates in this gesture towards transformations of political ontology in their claims to be “...democratizing real estate development” (BGLC: Facebook December 4). They clarify their statement by explaining:

[w]e do not mean to ruffle [sic] any feathers with existing development firms by using this ‘democracy’ word but we remain convinced that by engaging the Living Community buyers as co-designers and investors, we are not only creating communities that represent the true deed and desires of the population at large but also allowing average home buyers to participate in the profits and upswing of the development game (BGLC: Facebook December 4)

The vision of democratic political transformation that BlueGreen Living Communities proposes as the promise of a renewed social contract fits comfortably within the institutions and structures of modern politics as government that secures the individual and her property: “[o]ur communities afford residents a sense of security both in terms of their property and in terms of their own personal safety and that of their families. Social sustainability implies connectivity: connections with friends and neighbours over time and space. Our communities provide the physical and the social constructs that allow that connectivity to grow naturally over time” (BGLC: Social Sustainability). Further, the

security and order that this ‘natural’ growth provides depends on a thoroughly pre-planned physical space and a carefully structured originary social contract.

The vision proposed by Avalon Ecovillage claims a more radical position, a true transition to a new form of community embedded within a new set of political structures:

Avalon's comprehensive World Centre Project will be a functional demonstration of community learning and sustainable development founded in the new paradigm values and technologies. It presents a rare opportunity to build from the ground up, rather than trying to change old institutions and community structures from within (Avalon: New Millennium Market Trends)

Through this apparent openness to a diversity of visions and diversity of opinions, it becomes possible to promise that “[w]hatever you are seeking, you will find it in Kelowna” (Kettle Valley: Village of Kettle Valley): an open future awaits, one in which you will find, or constitute, the form of person and form of community that you want to embody. Significantly, the regulative function of these proposals posits its possibility in terms of this vision of “future communities,” as the continually ‘yet-to-come,’ and thus as a form of impossibility in the present. The good life of the individual and the community is found in the nexus of this boundary between the possible and the impossible, specifically in the impossible possibility of materializing the future possible within the present. And so the Village of Kettle Valley invites residents to “[c]ome discover a sense of place, belonging, and community *you didn't think possible* - one that heartens you to enrich your home, enhance your lifestyle, and truly better your life” (Kettle Valley: Community; emphasis added). This ideal of the perfectly secure community, of Avalon or the “enlightened society,” constitutes a problem, in that it can never exist in a finished form, but only ever as ongoing processes that attempt to materialize an idealized image of what the enlightened society, the perfect political community, might be. The promise of perpetual sustainability is inevitably void, regardless of attempts to act *as if* the ideal of the authority of the self were any more secure than the ideal of communal authority. Even Gerhard Blenk, visionary developer of Wilden, who is “now in his 70s, ... probably won't be around to see his vision completed” (Bernard 2012: n.p.). Thus, even the master-planner, the figure of sovereign decision-making, must contend with the mortality of human being.

*Impossibility of ontology as a route to politics*

These development models embody the political claim that finitude is ideally overcome with the right development. This possibility is defined, in the narrative of urbanization, as the possibility to participate in drawing and redrawing the determinative boundaries of contemporary urban life, and thus to participate in and experience the boundary between politics and its limits: ontologies of urbanization reflect ontologies of politics and ontologies of ‘human’ being, and all display the ontological instability that is the hallmark of the aporetic logic. When these limits are configured in such ontological terms, certain patterns emerge. As already seen, through these plans and proposals, participants and observers are invited to delineate the boundaries between properly “democratic” politics and other modes of decision. Simultaneous attempts emerge to delineate the boundaries between properly secure or “sustainable” politics and other, more fragile modes of existence. Crucially, these practices to define the boundaries of politics and its limits are not coextensive; rather, at times they converge and at other times diverge. And within this moiré pattern of intensifications and evacuations, gaps again take form, gaps that open significant insight into the operation of aporetic logic. The earlier possibility/necessity/impossibility of establishing a stable, well-balanced boundary within the narrative terms of urbanization as transition now transitions into the articulation of the possibility/necessity/impossibility of determining a secure relationship within a modern political ontology that offers democracy and sovereignty as both convergent and divergent configurations of authority. The undecidability within this structure of who gets to make decisions and how the decisions can be made forms the aporetic possibility/impossibility at the heart of this configuration of the boundary between politics and its limits. There are two outcomes of this possibility/impossibility dynamic. First, the condition of possibility for stable political ontology drives the practices of idealization that, when found to be less stable than desired, simultaneously transforms idealizations into their regulative form and thus confirms the impossibility of the idealized stability. Second, the condition of impossibility generates a panic at the condition of uncertainty, and opens a hiatus into which further acts of authorization are inserted. Thus the aporetic dynamic of urbanization is always in the mode of transition, but not linear, and not secured within an ontological foundation. Insofar as ontologies of

urbanization function as proxies for ontologies of politics, the parallel dynamic emerges, repeating the call for transformed political ontologies in the face of transformed modes of urbanization while simultaneously generating recognition of the inherent instability of political ontology.

The vulnerability of development becomes yet another encounter with the limit experience of the impossible presumptions of ontological certainty. Yet, following the aporetic logic, this impossibility is experienced as a problem in desperate need of a solution, thus driving the aporetic dynamic that appeals the dream of a sovereign that can decide on an ontology of politics and thus bring stability. Yet this impossibility can also be looked at differently, as the site of a hiatus. Might it be possible to reside within this hiatus without the panic that drives the desire for sovereign decisions? Might it be possible to experience and participate in the repercussions and reverberations of the impossibility of political ontology, to get caught in the sway of patterns of interference and divergence that this void produces, to acknowledge the impending moment of decision and hold it simultaneously at bay?

### **Ten Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)**

#### *Reflecting urbanization*

In the fall of 2012, the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, an artist-run non-profit that supports emerging and alternative artists through gallery exhibitions and community programming, hosted the Toronto-based artist Swintak to participate in a residency and exhibition. Swintak's project, titled *10 Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)* used "the City of Kelowna as a site for Impossible Projects that are not only relevant and critical, but also playful and humorous" (Alternator 2012: n.p.). In an interview that ran in one of the local papers, Swintak describes her method in the language of the flâneuse, the quintessentially modern mode of experiencing the city: "I go to a city. I walk around, check out what's happening and talk to people and usually devise a project based on that" (Stanford 2012: n.p.). She has spent several years accepting residencies in major cities around the world, pursuing this emplaced method of artistic practice. For the installation *Location! Location! Location!* (2010, with Don Miller), a condemned cottage on the University of Toronto's Mississauga campus was simultaneously inhabited, dismantled, transported by hand to the Blackwood Gallery, and

reassembled, with all replacement pieces painted or dyed chroma green, the shade used in green screens.<sup>61</sup> For the Netherland-based project *Ship of Fools* (2009, with Millennia Lytle, Chad Jagoe, Don Miller, John Marriott, Olia Mishchenko, and Mitzi Pederson) she worked collectively to scavenge material and build, with no collective knowledge, a full-scale ship that encapsulated each artist's reflections on the impossible, materialized within the structure and accessible to viewers.<sup>62</sup> Swintak brings this global experience of cities and their residents into conversation with each locale in which she works, sparking an aesthetic response to place that continually changes as her mediated interactions between the global and the local develop. As she describes it:

I've been working a lot in big cities lately, places like Paris and Amsterdam, but the places where I've had the best time with site-specific work has generally been smaller and on the cusp of changing. And Kelowna totally fits that bill (Stanford 2012: n.p.).

This commentary on her own process appears to reflect common presumptions of urbanization as a process of transition from rural to urban and cognate boundaries. Kelowna becomes a particularly interesting place for her to work precisely because it is in the midst of the dynamic transitions that define urbanization; it is still in the process of redefining boundaries that will be appropriate for its future city condition.

Because Kelowna so easily fits the stereotyped definition of 'urbanization' as a transition between the opposed poles that boundaries create, it reflects a specific condition in which the boundary practices of urbanization, and the patterns they generate, are made visible. Whether as a response to the pervasive use of such cognate boundaries to define urbanization, or whether as a reflection of the reliance on the boundaries of nature and culture that predominate in Kelowna (which defines its authentic identity very closely with its scenic landscape), Swintak's early processes to familiarize herself with Kelowna included

poring over hundreds of photographs of minerals and crystals, arrayed in neat rows on the floor of the gallery. While at first glance they appeared to be just images of rocks, albeit colourful

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<sup>61</sup> <http://www.blackwoodgallery.ca/Web%20Images/2010/Location!Location!Location!/Location-ArtPapers.pdf>

<sup>62</sup> <http://hotelmariakapel.nl/wp/2009/05/ship-of-tools/#more-502>

ones, to Swintak they evoked reflections of the building and architecture everywhere around her (Stanford 2012: n.p.).

This desire to see continuities between nature and culture reflects how the boundary division – which holds them as distinct, in tension, and in need of reconciliation – is a fundamental presumption within common accounts of urbanization. Cognate boundaries are elsewhere invoked with even more surety: giving her impressions of current development in Kelowna, Swintak observes: “Just the downtown core, you can see it’s in the process of changing...I think it’s great to have people to try to keep us centred to the city instead of just having strip malls on the outskirts” (Stanford 2012: n.p.). One of the most dominant transition narratives in Kelowna – that the mid-century solution to industrialization, found in the suburb as an attempt to reconcile tensions out of balance, is now a problematic condition of urbanization that must be solved by developing forms of densified, revitalized urban cores – is thus quickly repeated and reflected as a defining feature of Kelowna’s development. Like a kaleidoscope or an echo chamber, elements of her descriptions of her work in Kelowna appear to enclose the narratives of urbanization as transition and urbanization as boundary practice, intensify them, and give them a new form, materialized for all to see. In this sense, her process mimics the patterns and practices of the figure of the urban planner reflected in the three development models in Kelowna, the figure who balances global expertise and local insight to produce a material form, an installation in space, which can house authentic community.

*From urbanization to urbanification: the urban planner gone wrong*

To focus only on patterns of reflection is to miss much of the dynamism at play in boundary practices, whether within urbanization or within Swintak’s work. Rather than simply reflect the dominant boundaries that delineate urbanization, Swintak’s project in Kelowna exposes the refractions and diffractions at work in narratives of transition and balance, and in assumptions of the relationship between authority and ontological stability. While her previous projects engage with the tensions between artistic creativity and its limits – an aesthetic relationship between possibility and impossibility – the project in Kelowna is one of a recent series that focus specifically on making these limits not just visible but experiential, affective, and resonant. After creating what might be interpreted as sketches or preparatory works – a grid of the photos of rocks and minerals

that is reminiscent of the scientific table on the one hand, and of city blocks on the other; a functional hovercraft constructed out of a lawn chair and operated on Kelowna's lakeside boardwalk – the titular *10 Ideas for Kelowna* are presented in the form of calls for development proposals that will never proceed. The impossible projects include an invitation for local skateboarders to help design a new high rise as a “progressive alternative to a traditional sports arena,” which would “transform the skyline” and “attract entrepreneurs”; a call for property owners, urban developers, renovators and private financiers for a “radical renovation project” of “mineral remodeling,” which would take old buildings and remodel them to look like minerals; a proposal to reconstruct the Bennett Bridge that connects Kelowna to West Kelowna to feature a loop-the-loop in the centre; and an invitation to a billionaire benefactor, an astrophysicist, a nuclear physicist, a choreographer, and a ballet company to participate in an “experiential global-scale urban dance project” that involves “manufacturing gravitational anomalies” that allow for an exploration of “human levitation” and “foundational architectures” (Golden Phoenix 2014). A local media outlet offers the helpful assessment that “[i]t's unlikely ... [that] Swintak's more ambitious ideas for Kelowna art projects will ever be built, but then again, that's not really the point of her being here” (Stanford 2012: n.p.) – an exaggerated understatement that inadvertently highlights the popular faith in the planner's role in determining how urbanization is supposed to proceed as a process of turning ideal forms into material forms that distinguish a city from its others and its exteriors.

Swintak acknowledges this dis/affiliation between her project and the presumed authority of the planner by claiming that “...here I'm positioning myself as an urban planner gone wrong,” (Stanford 2012: n.p.). Her impossible projects, visions of Kelowna that will only ever exist in their absence, continually mis-translate standard narratives of the activity of the planner as materializing idealizations of communal being into city form. In one playful comment, Swintak claims that “[i]t's easy from up on the hill to picture putting a big glass dome over the city and lifting it off the ground” (Stanford 2012: n.p.), which highlights how easy it is to idealize the impossible future city while simultaneously inverting these idealizations by inverting the position of the proverbial “city on the hill” that is supposed to guide not just urban development but moral and

political progress. Here, instead of the planner imposing a bird's eye/god's eye view on the city below, using the model of the ideal political community, the planner-gone-wrong lifts up the city as it is and turns that into an object of contemplation. Yet even this is impossible, because the city 'as it is' also cannot exist – not in a form that can be covered, isolated, and objectified in this manner.

In the process of juxtaposing her impossible projects with the trajectory of urbanization as a series of urban planning projects, Swintak gives an increased tangibility to the play of authority as it attempts to determine and stabilize its ontological foundations, in this case through ontologies of urbanization itself. It is precisely these desired ontological foundations that Swintak engages in their possibility, necessity, and impossibility, exploring “a hypothetical realm where artists have access to all the money in the world, the ability to bend time and space, to reform social systems as a whole and consider anything and everything as material for creative intervention” (Alternator 2012). Here, the role of the “artist” becomes an entry into forms of practice and assumptions of effects that are exceedingly common, but simultaneously both subterranean and superficial: the production of artifacts that compose the world; the evacuation of participation in this production; the naturalization of outcomes; the absence of a finished product that can be covered, displayed, and objectified. As such, the artist draws attention to the instability of the practice and the uncertainty of pattern of effects.

The aporetic structure of the boundary practices of urbanization generate a consistent set of patterns that produce regulative visions of stable subjective and communal political identities that can effectively secure against the instability at the heart of the aporetic logic. The perceived or desired end point of urbanization – the *real* city, the world-class city, the city with soul, the city lifted up under glass to be admired – is one permutation of this regulative vision, and it serves only to remind places like Kelowna that they will never be urban enough. *10 Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)* opens space and time to reconsider the presumptions that the material processes of urbanization derive from a naturalized necessity. The hiatus where these impossible projects exist but can never exist 'as such' generates multiple patterns of diffraction, upending 'urbanization' as an naturalized process of transition and thus a series of phenomena that can be understood as ontologically settled. To emphasize this opening,

Swintak introduces a subtle linguistic shift, characterizing Kelowna as having “an ‘urbanification’ thing going on here” (Stanford 2012: n.p.). This shift in usage sends patterns of interference into dominant accounts of urbanization. The transformation of the suffix, from *-ize* to *-fy*, shifts from an emphasis on “becoming like or being made like the urban” (with the tensions between presumptions of self-directed and externally-enforced process), to an emphasis on “making the urban” as a production of and in place, an effect of artificial, artistic, aesthetic, and political interventions.<sup>63</sup> Therefore, urbanification, pursued through these *Impossible Projects*, disrupts claims of a settled ontological urban form that can be the necessary endpoint of the urbanization process and disrupts ontological claims about urbanization as a dynamic condition at the root of political transitions.

More importantly, the *Impossible Projects* also draw critical attention to the presumption that ontological stability, in this case an ontology of urbanization, can be the basis of communal stability, *political* stability. Viewing Kelowna through the lens of urbanification, rather than urbanization, opens the possibility of “taking the next step further and making radical proposals for the city that would not be possible” (Swintak, quoted in Stanford 2012: n.p.). The shift in emphasis embodied in *urbanification* simultaneously draws attention to the ways that urbanization functions as an injunction to become like/be made like the city, and clarifies the impossibility of ever succeeding in the regulative political project embedded within this injunction. In other words, urbanification generates patterns of diffraction out of the impossible regulative functions of urbanization, acknowledging how dreams of real city status both drive urbanization and signal the impossibilities inherent in its aporetic core. Swintak states that, through

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<sup>63</sup> “**-fy**: word-forming element meaning “make, make into,” from French *-fier*, from Latin *-ficare*, from unstressed form of *facere* “to make, do” (see *factitious*).”  
([http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed\\_in\\_frame=0&search=-fy&searchmode=none](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?allowed_in_frame=0&search=-fy&searchmode=none)).

“**factitious (adj.)**: 1640s, “made by or resulting from art, artificial,” from Latin *facticius/factitius* “artificial,” from *factus* “elaborate, artistic,” past participle adjective from *facere* “do” (source of French *faire*, Spanish *hacer*), from PIE root *\*dhe-* “to put, to do” (cognates: Sanskrit *dadhati* “puts, places;” Avestan *dadaiti* “he puts;” Old Persian *ada* “he made;” Hittite *dai-* “to place;” Greek *tithenai* “to put, set, place;” Lithuanian *deti* “to put;” Polish *dziać się* “to be happening;” Russian *delat'* “to do;” Old High German *tuon*, German *tun*, Old Saxon, Old English *don* “to do;” Old Frisian *dua*, Old Swedish *duon*, Gothic *gadeths* “a doing;” Old Norse *dalidun* “they did”). Related: *Factitiously*; *factitiousness*.”  
([http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=factitious&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=factitious&allowed_in_frame=0)).

urbanification, she is "...thinking of ways to make avant garde modifications to the city that would take it one step further than just being a metropolis" (Swintak, quoted in Stanford 2012: n.p.). By interrupting the process whereby urban plan is translated into urban material, *10 Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)* rejects the regulative model of urbanization, both in its ontological configuration and in its spatiotemporal configuration. Insofar as "... [Swintak's] idea for the bridge, or that glass dome covering our city will probably not become a reality – at least not in our lifetimes..." (Stanford 2012: n.p.), she offers the possibility of interrupting the drive for certainty that can ensure individual and communal vitality, by disrupting the construction of the ontological and spatiotemporal boundaries that are central to the production of these patterns.

*Impossible Projects* asks residents to consider the conditions that structure the aporetic desire for certain decisions and fear of impossible certainty, impossibilities that generate again the desire for certainty and security, and thus the pattern of returns to forms of sovereignty. Urbanification does not claim to escape, exceed, or avoid these patterns, but it does suggest the possibility of encountering the aporetic hiatus with a response other than panic, a response based in a seriously playful engagement with these limits. The call for projects that will never proceed functions as an interference to the usual response to the impossibilities bound into regulative notions of urbanization, and thus offers a diffraction of this dominant pattern. By extension, these diffractions also disrupt the dominant pattern whereby ontology itself is perceived as a foundation for stable politics. It suggests the possibility of generating new patterns that eschew panic, that destabilize the authority of the regulative ideal and disregulate the regulative and well-regulated political subject. Urbanification thus interferes with the long-standing ties that bind accounts of the conditions of possibility, necessity, and impossibility of urbanization to the limits of the political expressed as the tension inherent in authority as sovereignty, which sets up the undecidable relation between centralized, hierarchical authority and shared, communally diffused authority. *10 Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)* suggests that other forms of communal life may become possible in the gaps opened by aporetic impossibility.

## Epistemology

### Transitions

It becomes increasingly clear, reading the models of development in Kelowna, that the boundaries that locate and constitute Kelowna are not nearly as secure as the dominant narrative of urbanization claims. There are significant, unresolved contestations over Kelowna as a geographic 'place' – as the Syilx people never signed a treaty with the Crown (either Britain directly, or British Columbia, or the Federal government) and have never abandoned their claims to this land – just as there are unresolved insecurities in accounts over the ontological 'nature' of Kelowna and the nature of urbanization in this place. These contestations extend to debates over the categories that are used to give meaning to Kelowna: categories that arise from and enable the repetition of boundaries of modern urbanization that global urbanization is supposed to supersede – such as rural/urban, nature/culture, and so on – but also the boundaries of modern politics that are similarly claimed to be vestigial – community, authenticity, identity, authority. Most significantly, these categories are used, reflexively, repetitively, to define the boundaries of political epistemology itself, from inside its claimed terrain.

The aporetic impossibility of ontology, and of ontological politics, which emerges from the patterns of reflection, refraction, and diffraction of and between the concatenations of these boundaries within the three core models of development in Kelowna, generates a particular form of solution, namely attempts to circumvent unstable and undecidable ontological determinations by pursuing epistemological certainty. If ontological stability is impossible (though always desired), and ontological stability a desired but impossible source of political stability, then epistemology becomes a possible, and certainly desirable, basis for claims to certainty. There are two versions of this solution. The first move is to claim that ontology remains relevant, and a reliable political ontology possible, but that a failure in the categories and their configuration into an epistemological framework is responsible for the lack of ontological certainty. The desire, here, is for new categories and epistemologies of urbanization, and of politics, that can produce ontological certainty at long last; but here, the boundary practices that

delineate the hiatus between configurations of ontology and epistemology instead contribute to their ongoing insecurity. The second move is to claim that ontology is no longer relevant: that it has been either constituted as irrelevant by the transitions of global urbanization or that it has been rendered fixed, unquestionable, unassailable by the all-pervasive intensive and extensive processes of *planetary* urbanization. The desire, here, is for new categories that can do sufficient work in defining and ordering the new phenomena that a decision on constitutive ontology becomes unnecessary. The problem, however, is that the move to obscure the role of ontology in defining the possibilities of epistemology both relies upon, and hopes similarly to obscure, a very modern centralization of the authority to define. In either case, the same boundary practices that are being used to determine the categories which are supposed to define and convey knowledge about urbanization, and thus to define the necessary or possible epistemological configurations, are simultaneously being used to designate the appropriate spacetime, or the appropriate ontology, or, as has yet to be considered, the appropriate phenomenology of urbanization.

The aporetic reading followed so far traces how boundary practices generate their own inherent insecurity, such that locating political security through spatiotemporal designations or ontological determinations is continually undermined, even as these moves are continually reaffirmed as necessary and possible. This pattern of necessity, possibility, and impossibility reappears in attempts to configure urbanization in epistemological terms, through amplifications, attenuations, and reconfigurations of features already shown to be at work in Kelowna. The insecurity that is a core feature of the aporetic logic generates the appearance of epistemological categories under constant threat, which in turn generates continual attempts to resecure the epistemological terms, through practices that police given boundary determinations of rural and urban, nature and culture, being like the urban and becoming like the urban, on one hand, and that idealize possible reconciliations on the other. The effects of these practices can take spatiotemporal, ontological, and phenomenological configurations, but always contingently. The boundaries that establish the categories of urbanization, and of politics, are under contest and thus not only always uncertain, but always threatened, as are the

boundaries that attempt to establish epistemology itself as a reliable route to knowledge of, and authority over, urbanization and politics.

The production of category boundaries and epistemological configurations can be traced as a series of patterns of reflection, refraction, and diffraction within the same proposals and plans for development in Kelowna. What emerge are a range of repetitions in the use of the same standard boundaries of urbanization (rural/urban and so on) and the same standard boundaries of politics (community, identity, authenticity) – repetitions that are functionally significant, even as they give the appearance of generic segments of marketing lingo – as well as permutations and destabilizations. These will be gestured to, minimally, not to capture in detail the evidence of their presence, but to use the patterns in their use and effects to push the political implications of aporetic boundary practices. The following sections continue to reside in the multiple hiatus produced by the development models in Kelowna in order to clarify, at this juncture, how aporetic boundaries not only ‘reflect’ epistemological configurations (how boundaries are over-determined by categories and epistemological claims) but how the aporetic boundary practices create patterns of refraction (through which categories and epistemological claims are determined as differentiated from and related to spacetime, ontology, or phenomenology) and patterns of diffraction (through which commitments to categorical certainty and coherent epistemological limits are unsettled and under-determined).

### **Manifestations of epistemological boundary work**

The epistemological function of the proliferating texts and images that seek to define appropriate modes of urbanization, and appropriate spacetimes, forms, categories, and experiences of politics, is performed through repetition and contextualization. The continual assumption of the universality of categories and of shared meanings both contradicts the claimed differences between the models of sustainable suburbs, densified downtown core, and intentional community and draws attention to the consistent logical configurations that bind these models together. Rather than explicitly define the categories, and the political epistemologies at work, there is an accrescence of meaning through layering and compiling, by piling on details and examples, until meaning emerges from the weight of its over-determination.

Thus, for example, the categories of rural and urban, which have been defined as central to definitions of urbanization and since re-defined as marginal, are not explicitly and extensively engaged and argued; rather, meaning accumulates through claims to exemplary features, and through grouping like or expected features to indicate the parameters and limits of the terms. So, in a structured both/and comparison offered by the Village of Kettle Valley, the urban is defined by a list of its iconic features, here the mix of ‘natural’ and ‘cultural’ amenities through which Kelowna markets itself as a ‘world-class mid-sized city’: “Downtown Kelowna is home to the Kelowna Yacht Club, Hot Sands Beach, Waterfront Park, Prospera Place, and the Kelowna Community Theatre” (Kettle Valley: Location). Aligning itself with the bucolic rural, while stressing its access to these urban amenities, “Kettle Valley offers families a quiet life in a great neighbourhood that is less than a 20 minute drive to downtown Kelowna” (Kettle Valley: Location). Similarly, the intentional community defines its urban development role through the repetition of categories as self-evident, positioning itself within an already determined configuration of land uses:

Comprehensive ecovillages may be developed in urban areas as a mixed-use neighbourhood or town centre renewal of existing buildings and infrastructure.... Typically, however, ecovillage development opportunities arise at the urban-rural fringe where marginally productive land is available for new projects (Avalon: Comprehensive Ecovillage Development Projects).

And yet the categories are unsettled as soon as they are used, and their presumed clarity obscured, as the need for intersecting terms like ‘rural/urban fringe’ suggests.

There is a parallel tendency to define relevant categories through the weight of details, and in particular to quantify and specify these details. Such a compilation of details is presented in a section of the Kettle Valley website titled ‘Nature and Community:’

Located in the heart of Kettle Valley, the Village Centre is home to more than a dozen businesses in an idyllic setting. ... Kettle Valley is adjacent to the Johns Family Nature Conservancy Regional Park, an incredible space with more than 402 hectares perched high above Kelowna in the southern hills. This spectacular park is home to many kilometres of trails that are perfect for a summer hike and taking in spectacular views of Kelowna, West Kelowna, Okanagan Lake, and the valley below. The nearby woods are also home to

some interesting and beautiful wildlife, including columbian ground squirrels, mushrooms, indian paintbrush, wild tiger lillies, grouse, deer, and bobcats (Kettle Valley: Nature and Community).

Here potential residents are given precise land measurements, place names, even flora and fauna, all to indicate how *knowable* this community is, in implicit contrast to the disordered unfamiliar that can perpetually threaten the urban centre. At times, this drive to specify, define, and order phenomena into a working knowledge of the community becomes literal, such as through the educational pamphlet produced by Wilden:

Being serenaded by songbirds and watching deer meander through the wooded hillside is part of daily life in Wilden. When you move to Wilden, you will receive a booklet called, "Guide to the Wild Side" by author Deborah Greaves that gives you concise information on the native plants and animals and encourages you to learn more about the fascinating ecosystem that surrounds you (Wilden: Nature and Wildlife).

This process of specification appears again as a means of locating and defining community within and against the boundaries of local and global:

YLW has experienced rapid growth over the last several years and offers daily flights to Calgary, Toronto, Vancouver, Edmonton, Victoria, Fort McMurray, and Seattle. There are also fast and convenient flights to other cities in Western Canada, as well as California, Mexico, Las Vegas, and other sun destinations (Kettle Valley: Location).

These lists, compilations, and specifications are not merely a means to inductive definition of relevant categories, but also a means of demonstrating control over the *contextual* environment, the authority to designate complex and uncertain phenomena as discrete, knowable, and thus secure categories.

While this process attempts to use epistemological boundary practices to clarify the appropriate possession and process of authority within the community (understood broadly), at times the multiple repetitions of boundaries works not to align but to disrupt the boundaries of authority. In the case of Central Green, the downtown development process managed by the City of Kelowna on land it owns, it was the boundaries between state and market, politics and economics that came to visible conflict. After an extensive, multi-month, multi-stakeholder, and multi-expert public planning process that culminated

in a design vision, a set of sustainability principles and practices, and a Comprehensive Development Zone bylaw, city staff submitted a memorandum to council recommending scaling back the sustainability criteria due to an ‘imbalance’ in the project’s triple bottom line accounting:

The key for the City is to not set the mandated requirements at too high a level such that it deters proponents from putting in a proposal. Staff believes the mandated requirements ... will significantly hamper the quality and quantity of RFP submissions and affect the creativity that would come from developer proposals. We much move forward with the understanding that any mandated encumbrance placed on the property will reduce the amount a developer will be able to pay for the property (Kelowna 2009b: 2).

This explicit collision between the presumed authority of the city to define the social and sustainable value of the community, and the presumed authority of ‘the market’ to define the economic value of the property, indicates the over-determination of the possibility of knowledge through authority/authority through knowledge. The city staff’s focus on accounting and quantification resonates with examples across all the developments, but in this instance, it draws attention to the boundary practices that attempt to define ‘community’ and ‘property’ as distinct, even as they overlap in space and time.

These few quotes, themselves carrying the awkward task of being exemplary of an extensive practice, use their terms as though every location, every feature, every relationship were self-evident. Nothing is defined, except through its use in context – which signals a repetition of the aporetic logic through which boundary practices and their effects can only be encountered in context. Here, the repetitive usage of these categories seeks to determine the boundaries of urbanization, of knowledge, and of politics. This repetitive usage has patterns of effects: attempts to define necessary categories that can determine the parameters and the features of urbanization; and with the ability to know urbanization comes the capacity to make the right choices to build a life within it, to intervene and manage according to a vision of the good life. Thus, the boundary practices on display through these models of development offer an epistemological claim about the possibilities of authority within urbanization, and they work to secure, through their performance of definition, detail, and accounting, the

necessary epistemological configuration. However, there is, simultaneous to these proliferating attempts to define through accumulation, an absolute absence of the certainty and precision that seems to be a primary desire. Similar to the slippage between urbanization and development encountered in the dominant transition narrative of Kelowna, what is presumed to be so over-determined that it need not be clearly defined, explained, and distinguished – not this time, not this time, not this time – reveals itself to be clearly under-determined.

### **A regulative epistemology of plans and visions**

Just as claims about the appropriate boundaries, and thus limits, of urbanization and politics depend on claims to the ability to define and mobilize the relevant categories of description, the technique of the plan – the articulation of a vision for a development – also operates as an epistemological claim. Whereas the reading of the OCP centres on how the plan operates as a spatiotemporal production, and the previous reading of the models of development centre on how the plan operates as an ontological claim, now it also becomes possible to focus on how claims to the ability to plan authentic communities and claims to vision both rely on claims about the self-evident nature of knowledge. This epistemological configuration relies on a shared commitment to this assumed structure of knowledge: knowledge is universal, reliable, and transferable, made possible by the capacity of categories and concepts to define the phenomena and thus bring order to the instability of urbanization. Within this configuration of epistemology, it becomes possible to assert that “[w]e all know that we live in an era of ecological distress” (BGLC: Environmental Sustainability), and to suggest that a single intentional community has the inherent capacity to “[d]emonstrate a comprehensive model of sustainable development, community education, organic growing and environmental stewardship that is locally relevant and transferable to other parts of the world” (Avalon: Project Vision, Mission, and Goals).

These epistemological claims work by elaborating, densifying, and intensifying the function of the model itself. The model, prevalent in its ontological configuration as the ideal form that can be translated into a material instantiation, here appears as the scaled down reduction or miniaturization that can transform complex phenomena into

discrete, knowable entities, distinct from each other and bound in a common structure of knowledge. This form of epistemological plan is seen to open possibilities that should be pursued. On the one hand, the possibility opens of using the plan to identify and order component parts into a coherent whole, of moving from the particular to the universal: “The opportunity available to us today to plan this area comprehensively and put in place a plan where each building, road, or public space complements one another is an opportunity that should not be missed” (Kelowna: Downtown Redevelopment). On the other hand, the plan opens the possibility of taking holistic movements and bringing them to a scale that can be made local, of moving from the universal to the particular, such as how “Wilden exemplifies the green, environmental shift that’s happening in Canada” (Freake 2008: n.p.). Whether in the form of a private firm or a specialist-mediated community planning processes, the plan becomes reliant on forms of research, knowledge-making, and expertise:

For more than a decade, Avalon’s founder Laurel Zaseybida undertook extensive research and created the sustainable planning concepts, building and landscape designs, financial projections, and educational marketing strategies, with the assistance of a dedicated team of associated consultants, advisors and seed investors (Avalon: Comprehensive Ecovillage Development Projects).

As an inductive process of moving from observed phenomena, to categories, to secure knowledge, “[t]he plan is expected to define and specify all required development regulations including: footprint, form, character; height, density and use; all amenities; servicing requirements for all future development within the zone” (Kelowna: Downtown Redevelopment). As a deductive process of moving from secure knowledge, to categories, to ordered phenomena, the plan relies on “guidelines [that] have been developed from the Organizing Principles [and]... the Urban Design Principles .... They are intended to provide clarity of vision for the character of this district, and to provide a structure of certainty to guide the shape of the architecture” (Kelowna 2008d: 5). In other words, the plans simultaneously reproduce both of the standard logical forms.

Further, the plan becomes a technique through which necessary acts of specification, translation, and education are made possible:

[Avalon] aspires to create a place that acts as a catalyst for positive change and where citizens from all over the world can exchange their knowledge and demonstrate their experience in a spirit of friendship and peace (Avalon: Project Background).

Rather than simply emerging organically from a given, ontologically necessary feature of the world, as the boundary distinction between ontology and epistemology tries to suggest, these boundary practices, by configuring a field appropriate to ‘epistemology,’ function as attempts to produce and ensure a ‘universal’ structure of knowledge. Yet no matter what element or what question, the repetition of categories and concepts – simultaneously ‘determined’ through context, use, and example; over-determined by repetition; and indeterminable through lack of security – exposes the limitations that arise. These limitations include the interruptions of and interferences to the presumed inevitable directionality conveyed by the plan (from plan to implementation to completion), such as the curtailed sustainability criteria of Central Green, or the refusal of development permission to Avalon Ecovillage. Such events demonstrate the limits of the assumed epistemological authority of the plan, which cannot, immanently, account for unexpected conditions, development proposal rejections, and other processes that become configured as political externalities. However, the limitations become apparent as well through the repetitions of claims about the possibility, necessity, and impossibility of epistemological security: the repetition of the familiar pattern of these categorical determinations and their continual failure/disruption, which spurs the familiar reconstructions of the same pattern. This repetition of categories, concepts, and epistemological configurations is a permutation of the repetitions that plague the dominant narrative of urbanization in Kelowna. The epistemological commitment to categories that render the world available to observation and replication is both a technique for managing and ordering the complex phenomena of urbanization and exemplary of the patterns of repetition, return, and reconfiguration that signal the aporetic logic at work.

### **The aporetic logic of epistemology**

As seen through the OCP, the aporetic logic of boundaries is characterized by a specific spatiality and temporality, a pattern of movement that is distinct from the dialectic, as an endlessly forward movement between two poles, and distinct from relationality, characterized as an ever expanding and contracting universe of networks; it is a movement that, while attempting to progress, is characterized by circularity and return. Observing this spatiotemporal momentum within modern thought, Foucault suggests that the modern aporia not only produces a momentum of progress out of the hiatus, and a desire for an idealized reconstitution of separated terms, but that this aporia “caus[es] the endless birth and rebirth of a project” to “formalize” an ontology of the world and to “constitute, in spite of everything,” an epistemology through which it can reliably be known (2002: 270). In other words, the desire to fix urbanization through epistemological certainty, through redefined categories and redrawn boundaries, is not an alternative to an ontological approach, but deeply implicated, through the aporetic logic, in the configurations that enable dominant modern political ontologies, and ultimately the dream that modern politics can reach ontological security. What emerges is a slight of hand, a move to make political epistemology look like a distinct alternative to political ontology, rather than co-constitutive of it. However, the epistemological configuration of aporetic logic also displays its own patterns, as suggested above, and these patterns and their effects require their own tracing.

First, while claims of epistemological certainty also function on a regulative level to define and enforce the boundaries of urbanization and politics, the regulative work takes on distinctive features and mobilizes specific grammars. The language of the plans uses claims about the content and the function of categories and concepts as a means of regulating an ideal epistemological structure. The universality, transferability, transparency, and efficacy of knowledge cannot be perfectly achieved – as the examples cited here suggest, the plans and models continually confront the limitations of the ability of the categories effectively to order the phenomena as desired – but the plans continually repeat and repeat and repeat the possibility that this clarity might, eventually, be achieved in the future. The necessity, in the present, is to continue to act epistemologically as though this capacity were already instantiated in the plans and models, thus performing the desired regulative structure:

...The particular set of building and open spaces illustrated in these guidelines are not intended to be the final form of development, but rather represent a ‘conforming outline’ as a tangible starting point for detailed design to build upon (Kelowna 2008d: 5).

Crucially, this regulative structure depends on the amplifications provided by boundary practices that configure epistemology as a distinct form of account, and configure particular forms of epistemology as possible, necessary, and impossible.

Therefore, second, it becomes possible to see, through the epistemological configuration of aporetic boundaries, how the pervasive repetitions within the dominant account of urbanization in Kelowna, within the OCP, and within the development models are not merely shared commitments, force of habit, or marketing lingo, but rather represent a predominant pattern of reflection predicated on the desire for transferability, replicability, and consistency of categories, and through categories, of knowledge of urbanization and politics. The centralization of patterns of reflection, and the minimization or decentralization of patterns of refraction and diffraction, amplifies similarities, familiarities, and parallels, and thus emphasizes the appearance of epistemological security. The repetitions that sediment particular patterns encountered within accounts of and debates about urbanization in Kelowna, therefore, are themselves repetitions of the patterns of aporetic boundary practices. However, the inherent undecidability that plagues other configurations of the aporetic logic is not escaped through the definition and repetition of epistemological categories, which is why these category boundaries become such an important site for the repetitive practices of authorization that are both already familiar and that here take on distinctive formulations. Following the aporetic logic, the instability of epistemological boundaries not only reflects but also refracts and diffracts the political problem of authorization.

### **Community, authenticity, authority III**

Through the OCP, the possibility of community is defined, and thus limited, according to the delineation of spatiotemporal boundaries that can keep the identity of the community coherent against the rushing movement and geographic extension of the world, and through the three models of development, community has already been defined as an expression or materialization of *being together* at an ontological level.

Now, it becomes possible to see how the delineation of community is also made dependent on the boundaries that enable claims about specific forms of modern knowledge as a process of identification, definition, and ordering. Ekistics, the firm that did the Master Plans for both Kettle Valley and Wilden, explains the choice of their name by referring back to Greek as the foundation of modern knowledge:

The term 'ekistics', coined by the renowned urban planner Doxiadis (1903-75), was derived from the Greek word *oikos* meaning settlement or home. It describes the interdisciplinary study of human settlement making. The issues of community require a broad knowledge base that is best understood through different backgrounds and perspectives (Ekistics: Who We Are).

In case this appeal to traditions of epistemology in the determination of community was not clear enough, they proceed to focus their claim further: “[t]he term ekistics applies to the science of understanding and making human settlements” (Ekistics 2015: How We Work). Thus it is not sufficient to let communities emerge, but rather necessary to apply all the techniques and categories of “multidisciplinary” thought, a framing that reproduces boundaries within the field of knowledge. Further, it implicitly stakes a claim about the appropriate foundational boundary of politics itself, rooted in the *oikos*, the private sphere that eventually becomes bounded by the term *economics*, while minimizing the public sphere of the *polis*, the claim of a bounded collective that might generate different boundaries and limits of politics. This translation of the possibilities of politics to the limitations of a collection of homes bounded by a shared plan for community is reflected across the models:

BGLC provides integrated design and community building services. In conjunction with its architectural and engineering services, the company is well positioned to help define the social elements of the development through expert facilitation. ... The difference between a BLUEGREEN community and a grassroots development is in the supportive team BLUEGREEN provides to usher you through the process of forming a community, finding a suitable site, designing your future home, and figuring out how you will live together in your new neighbourhood (BGLC: Living Communities)

Significantly, by making political possibility dependent on the constitution of stable community, and this community dependent on refined practices of formal knowledge,

these articulations claim authority for those who accept and reproduce an established epistemological structure. In this way, epistemological claims about and practices within the complex of phenomena that are bounded as urbanization function, usually implicitly but at times explicitly, as political epistemologies.

As seen through the focus on the boundaries of ontology and their patterns of effects, these claims for authority are indivisible from claims about authenticity in and of community. Yet whereas, in ontological configurations, authenticity derives from insight into the ‘nature’ of community, and thus its ideal form, here authenticity derives from claims to participate in place-based research, knowledge-making, and knowledge-sharing:

Avalon can help ecovillage development projects adapt to the existing fringe landscape without destroying its regional character, liveability, critical ecosystems and agricultural productivity. We build on Laurel Zaseybida’s pioneering thesis work entitled: “Sustainability at the Urban-Rural Fringe: A Spatial-Contextual Environmental Planning Process for BC’s Central Okanagan Region” (University of Waterloo, 1994). Our unique landscape assessment process identifies site development constraint and opportunity areas utilizing colour-coded overlay mapping of hazards, natural resources, ecological habitats, energetic zones, areas of social significance and other functions. Our clients then explore exciting new settlement design and sustainable management approaches, and ‘backcast’ implementation steps from the desired future development scenario (Avalon: Comprehensive Ecovillage Development Projects)

There is, therefore, a significant refraction of the concept of authenticity when it intersects with the boundaries of epistemology. It no longer acts to centre claims to ontological certitude, but rather to centre authority on the capacity to ensure what can be accepted as *factual*; not just a clear vision of the ideal, but the capacity to authorize its *veracity*, even if it does not yet materially exist. Authenticity through urban design becomes a claim about a factual account of place, as determined by categories of definition, identification, and analysis. Within this epistemological structure, the possibilities of giving an account of politics become a reflection of modern practices of accounting, with the emphasis on defining, categorizing, putting in the correct place, and counting. Here, the familiar desire for stability, and the structures of authority that are

intended to bring this stability, are driven to a ‘positive’ designation of the politics of urbanization, in the positivist sense of a coherent, stable content to the concept of urbanization, and of politics. These repeating and refracting patterns of epistemological claims work to centralize the possible boundaries of knowledge into the necessity for a singular, dominant perspective in universal space and time. Accepting these boundaries of epistemology requires accepting that the categories and concepts that offer knowledge must be kept separate from the insight that brings understanding about the ontological nature of the world and the conditions of possibility for the forms it takes. While this arrangement suggests the restriction of the glorious range of possible, necessary, and impossible phenomena to a rather bare, dry world – some would say disenchanting – the exchange offers the capacity to participate in these practices of authority and share in the experience of security, just as a potential resident of the village of Kettle Valley is invited to “Redefine your lifestyle” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript) and promised, if this redefinition is successful, to reside where “[t]he atmosphere is calm and comforting, safe and serene – everything you’ve ever wanted for you and your family” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript).

The repetition of the failure of this promise, its continual reappearance, and its continual failure, is the dominant pattern of the aporetic logic, emerging from a panicked reaction to the gaps and voids created by points and moments of undecidability and insecurity. Despite dominant claims to epistemological certainty over urbanization, moments of undecidability offer diffractions that help to clarify the contours of the gaps in claims to the authority of knowledge. One such diffraction is apparent in the goal of Avalon to

[d]evelop the campus village district to include the following: global studies and sustainability institute, performing arts and multimedia venues, green building and technologies demonstration, eco-expo, innovative research facilities, healthy restaurants, ethical businesses, holistic medical institute, wellness spa complex, interfaith centre and retreat sanctuaries, sustainable farm futures centre, green residential neighbourhoods, centre for nature and the child, eco-and cultural tourism facilities, international retreat and conference centre, campus accommodation and bed and breakfasts, community and international outreach (Avalon: Project Vision, Mission and Goals).

Everything is here. Nothing is missing. In this desire to be a holistic, comprehensive, *world centre* of sustainability, the central undecidability structured into the boundaries of rural and urban, nature and culture, which continue to haunt accounts of urbanization and of politics, becomes clear: the ultimate balance can only be found in the inclusion of everything, all possibilities folded into the field of sustainable community, and thus the simultaneous repetition and obliteration of the necessary categories of meaning and knowledge. The distinctions and definitions on which this epistemology of urbanization depends are rendered impossible, the site of another aporetic hiatus, with the rush to redefine and resecure following to fill the void.

The presumptions of an effective structure of epistemology are acknowledged within, but also distinct from, the specific patterns of the boundaries of place and time and the boundaries of ontology. They function through their own practices of boundary delineation and their own patterns of effects, patterns that at times amplify, and at times intervene in those of spacetime and ontology. Participation in the boundaries that seek to designate and secure epistemology confers its own form of limit experience. To follow the aporetic logic of urbanization, and of politics, makes it impossible to give a *positive* account of politics, in the modern, empirical, positivist sense, but it does engage with the modern configurations of the problems of urbanization and politics in a positive way – attention to productive, generative practices and their effects – thus distinguishing itself from practices of negative critique. Rather than escaping the need to give an account of politics, analyzing aporetic boundary practices according to a *logic* of relationality at work in practices of urbanization becomes a means of developing a political account of these practices, in the sense that it offers an account of how these relations are governed in and through concrete and conceptual acts.

### **Impossible projects, impossible knowledge**

*10 Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)* and the discourses surrounding it provided an encounter with the impossibility of ontological dreams of ideal urbanization. However, it also functions as a reminder of the impossibility of moves to isolate and prioritize ontological claims about urbanization from epistemological claims and

structures. As a publically accessible artistic practice culminating in an installation piece at the Alternator Centre as well as a performance on Kelowna's waterfront of the Hovercraft in action, boundaries between preparation, exhibition, and completion are impracticable. Ephemeral project elements remain part of the whole, even after they disappear. Thus the engagements with the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of epistemologically secure urbanization pervade documentation of the workspace, the process, and the final public opening of the *Impossible Projects*.

Although *Impossible Projects* gestures implicitly towards the stakes in attempts to configure divisions between spacetimes, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization, it has a tendency to reflect dominant configurations of epistemologies of urbanization. While Swintak's use of urbanification highlights the emergent production of urban settings as a process of engagement with the limits of possibility rather than a naturalized process, it also opens the need to reflect on the forms of meaning and knowledge that are produced in and assumed by this aesthetic construction of urbanification. Thus the wall covered with charts, plans, and schematics – blank again for the public opening of the installation, but visible in the video documentation of the project – remain relevant in their absence. Apparently working notes to support the construction of the hovercraft chair, these charts speak both to processes that systematize and concretize knowledge, and to processes that enable problems to be defined and solved through the application of precise and appropriate categories and concepts. The wall of carefully arranged mineral images evokes the possibility of order derived from the spatialized grid (and imposed on urban built form in terms of the city block), as well as the possibilities of predictive knowledge derived from the periodic table of elements, even as the underlying structure of this particular grid remains obscure. Finally, the poster advertisements of the Calls for Participation that represent the core of the ten impossible projects themselves use categories – some common, some constructed – to determine boundaries of relevant projects as well as the boundaries that separate desired participants. These Calls for Participation reflect the belief that it is possible, through definition, labeling, and forecasting, to articulate and secure a vision of urbanization. Characteristically modern practices of epistemological determination are, therefore, reflected within the *Impossible Projects*.

Yet, through her articulation of urbanification, Swintak simultaneously suggests how these characteristic practices are continually being refracted. If epistemological authenticity and authority is frequently configured as the capacity to determine the factual, then Swintak's *Impossible Projects* offer a targeted counter-factual, not simply to dreams of idealized urbanization, but to dreams of epistemological authority. In grammatical and logical terms, the counter-factual construction operates as a subjunctive conditional, outlining an alternative outcome that is already confirmed as impossible because its antecedent happened in the past and cannot be changed: if only Highway 97 had not been run through the centre of Kelowna, the city would not have developed as an elongated series of atrocious strip malls. This counter-factual construction, which appears continually in popular assessments of urbanization in Kelowna, highlights not only the pervasive nostalgia but also the aporetic play of optimism and pessimism, hope and fear, which plague accounts of urbanization. Yet the counter-factual offered by *Impossible Projects* suggests that if only the projects as outlined were possible – a loop in the bridge, a refined version of gravity in public space, a high rise tower built for recreational enjoyment rather than profit – then urban community in Kelowna could take a different form. Insofar as each project is already confirmed as impossible, this counter-factual diffracts, generating patterns of desire and loss out of the absence of the conceived project, and highlighting the impossibility of authority as factual knowledge. Instead, viewers are invited to imagine how processes of urbanification might proceed if unbound from the authority wielded by those who claim to *know* what is possible, necessary, and impossible for appropriate urbanization.

As already noted, Swintak is characterized as modeling this process of “encounter and transformation” by constituting “a hypothetical realm where artists have access to all the money in the world, the ability to bend time and space, to reform social systems as a whole and consider anything and everything as material for creative intervention” (Alternator 2012). Recalling that ‘hypothetical’ derives its meaning, etymologically, from *hypothesis*, as the basis or foundation for an argument, as that which is placed under an argument to sustain it,<sup>64</sup> the characterization of functioning in a *hypothetical* world

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<sup>64</sup> “[hypothesis \(n.\)](#) 1590s, from Middle French *hypothese* and directly from Late Latin *hypothesis*, from Greek *hypothesis* “base, basis of an argument, supposition,” literally “a placing under,” from *hypo-* “under”

reflects the intense imbrication of epistemological assumptions and configurations within the ontological, and vice versa. This imbrication becomes clear in further attempts to explain Swintak's process and production of *Impossible Projects*: "Perhaps better understood as a concept rather than an installation or representation, her interest in 'impossible' art is driven by a desire to create ideas free from the constructs that bind more traditional artistic projects" (Stanford 2012: n.p.). Such a formulation of the artist's process demonstrates the pervasive reliance on the subjective capacity to generate concepts and categories of understanding that can effectively translate encounters with phenomena into knowledge.

The ontological and spatiotemporal disruptions that *Impossible Projects* produces suggest that such claims of an easy, direct, linear relation of cause and effect, experience and understanding are another form of boundary practice that attempt to configure the relations between epistemological modes. In this sense, the *Impossible Projects* function prismatically, generating patterns of refraction whereby the narrative of a unitary political logic of urbanization is opened, and the patterns of amplifications and attenuations of each configuration with and against the other becomes visible. It opens the need to consider, finally, the disruption of the self-regulated political subject as an ontological certainty and the parallel constructions of the subject who, through the imposition of concepts and categories, can accurately assess the meaning of these phenomena.

## Phenomenology

### Transitions

The aporetic boundary practices that work with and against each other in accounts of urbanization also work to constitute the limits of politics in spatiotemporal, formal, categorical, and inter/subjective terms. In temporal terms, this limit is conceived as origin stories and as idealized futures, and in spatial terms, this limit is conceived as the

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(see *sub-*) + *thesis* "a placing, proposition" (see *thesis*). A term in logic; narrower scientific sense is from 1640s" etymology online ([http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=hypothesis&allowed\\_in\\_frame=0](http://www.etymonline.com/index.php?term=hypothesis&allowed_in_frame=0))

geographic boundaries of community and the internal or external threats to these boundaries. In ontological terms, this limit is frequently experienced as a foundational insecurity that generates the desire for a form of sovereign authority that can guarantee not just political community or political subjectivity, but politics as ontological. In epistemological terms, this limit is confronted as the inability of categories and concepts to provide the authority to fix – effectively, permanently, universally – the ever-shifting phenomena of urbanization. These patterns of experiences of the limited capacity for urban plans and processes to order urbanization are encounters with the aporetic logic: the core undecidability expressed in and through these configurations is experienced as a pervasive, overwhelming, and threatening source of insecurity which drives the search for incontrovertible forms of authority. The multiple experiences of Kelowna as a city of hope and a city of fear reflect, refract, and diffract through the dominant account of urbanization here, through attempts of the OCP to manage this urbanization, and efforts by development projects to sell particular visions of urbanization. This pattern of emotional, affective, *visceral* encounters with aporetic boundaries as possibility, necessity, and limit, produces in turn a pattern of panicked reactions to the insecurity these limits produce.

Encounters with urbanization as an expression of the vulnerability of the limits of singular place and subject in space and time, the limits of ontological security of the self-authorizing subject, and the epistemological limits of the individual knowing subject, contribute to efforts to articulate reconfigured phenomenologies that are adequate for this uncertain global urban condition, and to account for the ways that the boundaries of subjectivity, embodiment, and interaction have been reconfigured by urban life. The commitment to a phenomenological condition of urbanization underlies the perception that we might not be able to define the city, but we can recognize one when we are in it (Amin and Thrift 2002): that our spatiotemporal location, ontological claims, and conceptual categories of the city, and by extension the non-city, may be inadequate to, or even insecure within, the transitions of contemporary life, but *the experience of being or becoming urban remains familiar*. This leads to accounts of the urban as a site and process of encounter, and depictions of the generative, unpredictable, and unbounded outcomes of urban encounters. Further, the phenomenological focus on the relations of

affect and meaning generated between a (reconfigured) subject and the transformed global urban world become a moment where the more obtuse political implications of urbanization as aporetic dynamics of space/time, ontology, and epistemology become more explicitly ‘personal’, relatable. Thus, there arise accounts of transformed modes of practice and engagement, particularly ones that expand or reconfigure what forms of relations and circulations animate the transformations, what forms of practice are relevant, and what forms of subjectivity and inter/subjectivity are produced by and through these mutual constitutions.

In Kelowna, the varied repetitions and reconfigurations of phenomenological configurations lead most explicitly to considerations about the “politics” of urbanization as a site of encounter with and engagement in a shared urban life, through formal institutions of government and informal processes. This designated political experience is continually defined as a shared encounter with the transitional and the familiar. In other words, the experience of urbanization as unsettling transition is central to the communally and geographically shared familiarity of the urban experience. However, as has become apparent in the previous readings of the OCP and the development models, the patterns of repetition and patterns of disruption are not so clear, nor so clearly shared. The repetition of commitments to characteristically modern delineations of politics is certainly familiar: repetitions of claims to unity, security, authenticity, identity, and belonging. Yet the patterns of refraction and diffraction, generated by the commitments to these unstable, impossible claims, take shape as specific attempts to account for the politics of urbanization in phenomenological terms. When this configuration is drawn into focus, the emphasis of the patterns shift to a concern for experience, lifestyle, and the affective pull of certain forms of subjectivity and community.

Despite some variation, these patterns are consistent across all three development models, promising balance, connection, and security through the constitution of built urban communities that can reconfigure phenomenological encounters and relations. In the vision of a densified downtown core, the promise encompasses immanent “aspects of vibrant city centres [through] descriptions and illustrations of the experience the City would like to achieve in the heart of its downtown for its community and visitors alike” (Kelowna: Downtown Redevelopment). Diverse possible encounters with the spatial and

material forms of urban life, as well as the social forms, become prioritized through forms of managed and manageable ‘experience,’ such as the “core intention” of planning efforts to create a “streetscape experience” that “enhances walking and encourages socially supportive sidewalk and public open space activity, making this an urban destination accessible and attractive to all Kelowna citizens and visitors to the community” (Kelowna 2008d: 5). If the downtown core attempts to manage the experience of insecurity generated by urbanization by carefully curating and constraining the conditions of urban encounter, the sustainable suburbs promise to manage this insecurity by limiting encounters that are characteristically urban. Both Kettle Valley and Wilden emphasize traditional, highly controlled forms of residential architecture, to protect against uncomfortable encounters with material urban disruption, and both emphasize their spatial distance from the urban centre as a means of managing the frequency and intensity of the urban experience. This emphasis on stability through ensuring the right form of visceral experience gives new context to Kettle Valley’s promise that “[t]he atmosphere [here] is calm and comforting, safe and serene - everything you’ve ever wanted for you and your family” (Kettle Valley: Video Transcript). Having distanced itself from the city centre, it necessarily centres itself on its own terms, as the core of the entire Valley, but also as the core of desirability: “[a]s the centre of British Columbia's Okanagan Valley, Kelowna offers an unrivaled living experience” (Kettle Valley: Village of Kettle Valley). Avalon, with its emphasis on the potential of the ecovillage to become a world centre of sustainability, focuses on a distinct vision of renewed encounter, “[m]aintain[ing] a balance between cerebral and experiential learning modalities, giving an important place to creative expression, hands-on experimentation, bodywork and movement” (Avalon: Project Vision, Mission and Goals). Lofty goals, in a place where the dominant definition of significant experience tells residents and visitors alike that “[y]ou haven’t lived life in the Okanagan until you’ve spent a summer afternoon in a boat on the lake” (Kettle Valley: Location).

### **Experiencing aporetic boundaries**

Attempts to use phenomenological reconfigurations to secure against the dynamic of instability generated by aporetic boundaries generates a distinctive emphasis not just

on drawing distinctions between the dominant terms of urbanization and finding a subsequent balance between them, but on notions of connectivity, embedded encounters, and affective responses. The viability of the standard boundaries of urbanization to offer security depends, now, upon their ability to evoke the appropriate senses of familiarity and wonder, and to maintain a connection between the comfortable (feeling that the rural past persists in the present) and the aspirational (feeling that a glorious urban future is immanent). Thus the vision of an urban “skyline experience” proposes that “Kelowna’s skyline will be key to its urban identity. As such, building forms within the subject area should symbolically enhance the narrowing of the lake that has fostered human habitation” (Kelowna 2008d: 6). The developments promise, in their ways, to renew or resecure these modes of connection, lost in the rush of modern urbanization, or configure them for a new age of global urban life. Similarly, then, Wilden invites residents to

explore Wilden’s thriving nature. ...From the day when Gerhard Blenk purchased the raw land, his plan was to sensitively grow the Wilden community in a way that would sustain the area’s natural ecosystem and preserve space for wildlife. Several ponds in Wilden are a haven for many kinds of plants, insects and aquatic life. ... But not only the ponds themselves; their connectivity is vital to healthy wildlife populations. To help facilitate wildlife movement between wetlands, safe underpasses beneath the roads are being incorporated in the development. The Western Painted Turtle can migrate safely across Union Road through a tunnel” (Wilden: Nature and Wildlife).

Actual and potential residents are invited to envision themselves as part of this connectivity, free to experience the security of being at home within a network of relations that manage to span rural and urban, nature and culture: “[i]magine, building your luxurious dream home in a place that is surrounded by a diverse natural hillside landscape with flowing creeks and miles of green space to enjoy a multitude of outdoor activities” (Kettle Valley: Lots and Homes). Increasingly, these residential developments promise to intensify the feeling of balance and connectivity through use of the Okanagan Transitional architectural style, which aims to reconfigure experiences of public and private space by blurring the boundary between the interior and exterior of the home:

The Okanagan Transitional home and architectural style is one that is developed around the unique lifestyle and scenery in the Okanagan Valley. A cross between the Prairie and Contemporary

home styles, Okanagan Transitional is a strong representation of the blend in contemporary styles, traditional materials, and a love of light and breathtaking views (Kettle Valley: Architectural Styles).

The same blurring offers a reconfigured encounter with the boundaries of public and private in the city centre, through the promise of the now-defunct CD21 Zoning process that “the high rise spaces would provide premium views of the natural attributes of the lake, hills, and valley, while not blocking the views for the general public. The waterfront needs to remain public and open so it continues to provide the incomparable part experience that Kelowna is famous for” (Kelowna: Downtown Redevelopment). Avalon Ecovillage promises this form of connective encounter in a local place, and at a global scale: “Avalon's campus village district will be globally connected with many other intentionally designed communities and holistic learning centres with whom local residents and visitors can communicate with for mutual sharing and inspiration” (Avalon: Planning and Development Themes).

Crucially, these promises are made not just through the form of urbanization offered; they are performed in the language and imagery of the project literatures and Web sites, which attempt to constitute an encounter with the vision of urban development offered and to generate the appropriate affective response. The articulation of community is meant to exert an attraction as powerful as a gravitational pull. The pictures of developments, particularly pictures that emphasize stark rocky hillsides bathed in the haze of late summer sunsets, are meant to make viewers feel this home in their heart, and the lack of it like a loss. When the problematique of the security of this phenomenological experience is centred, the possibility of the urban ‘plan’ refracts, and the claims of knowledge are transposed. The formal, positivist knowledge that gets stressed in more specifically epistemological configurations is now no longer sufficient, and can be part of the problem. What is required is the appropriate *feeling*, and thus an emphasis on forms of knowledge and meaning derived from affective, situated, and experienced conditions. EKISTICS, which claims that its master plans for both Wilden and Kettle Valley were derived from insight into the ‘science’ of human habitation, now emphasizes that “[t]his process of discovery demands much time, effort and experience as well as a special understanding of context - EKISTICS ensures that significant time

and effort is spent on each project as it is the only way to unveil the ‘spirit of a place’” (Ekistics: How We Work). The ability to translate encounter into an appropriate feeling, or affective response, is effectively naturalized, yet this ability, and the subject with this capacity, is both a phenomenological construction and the construction of the boundaries of a particular configuration of phenomenology as natural. The practices of idealization that are generated through the aporetic logic of urbanization refract to reinforce a particular form of (sovereign) subjectivity that can be governed by its capacity to experience the affective pull of the ideal, to correctly identify and experience the designated features of ‘urban’ life, and to manage and be managed through these experiences.

### **Phenomenological insecurity and the aporetic logic**

Reconfigured phenomenological accounts of urbanization in Kelowna frame experience as a source of honest and authentic encounter, and thus a reliable source of security. Political subjectivity, as a quality performed according to accepted modern practices in spaces designated public and private, is necessarily refracted. The political possibilities of these practices are no longer considered through modern categories of formal and informal processes of participation and representation, but rather through the pervasive lens of participating in an experience that is both shared and exclusive. Dominant boundaries of security, community, identity, and public and private are all subject to this reconfiguration, such that one vision of the possible downtown core combines the promises of “...increasing the safety of the downtown experience,” offering buildings with “dynamic interface[s] with the public realm,” “pay[ing] special attention to the edges that define public spaces, specifically to creation of streetwalls,” and ensuring “transition[s] between indoors and outdoors and the transition between public and private domains” (Kelowna 2008d: 5-6). Even practices that propose to follow characteristically modern political modes of engagement and activity are effectively limited to their ability to confer a familiar experience of consultation and democratic decision-making. Thus, while the bylaw and design proposal for the CD21 Zone was derived from a grant from a private development corporation to the city to identify a development mechanism that would make a desired hotel project viable, in economic and

political terms, the subsequent invitation for public involvement was still described as a “process [that] belongs to our community” and the intent was “to ensure that a final plan is one that will have the participation and support of our citizens” (Kelowna: Downtown Redevelopment). Similar constraints on possible modes of political engagement in development decisions to an experience of ‘democracy’ becomes apparent in the models that channel public consultation into the technique of the ‘dot-mocracy,’ as used in both the OCP process and the planning processes for the Central Green development (Kelowna 2008b: 4). Faced with such limitations, the best one can hope for, it seems, is to be identified as a legitimate “stakeholder,” defined as a group of “representative citizens who would have an enhanced level of input throughout the project” (Kelowna 2008a: 1).

As such, experience becomes another boundary of authority, now defined as the capacity to define and shape the form and intensity of experience: “[a]t the Village of Kettle Valley, I believe that we have successfully managed to create a development where the experience is such that people will want to live here a lifetime,” (Kettle Valley 2005: n.p.). This precise limitation of the meaning of the politics of urbanization to a carefully managed form of urban experience, and of political authority to these management practices, emerges across all models of development, regardless of whether they propose to build a sustainable suburb, a densified downtown core, or an intentional ecovillage. The vision for a comprehensive redevelopment of Kelowna’s downtown waterfront emphasized that all construction would need to attend to “human scale” and “street rhythm” in order for the speed, space, and patterns of interaction to be appropriately guided and structured. Refracted into the spatial resolution of the suburb, where balance and connectivity is identified primarily through proximity with “nature,” the core experience of community is developed through ensuring and managing encounters with this nature. Thus, Wilden promises residents “[n]ature [b]onding [e]xperiences,” arguing that “connect[ing] with nature and wildlife is a vital experience for children if they are to grow up to take care of the environment. Kids in Wilden grow up surrounded by natural space. Blenk Development inspires school kids to learn more about the integration of nature into living” (Wilden: Nature and Wildlife). In other words, through their geographic location, and their authoritative practices (the master plan of the

community, the provision of the wildlife booklet to residents), Wilden promises to ensure that residents, even minors, will be incorporated into the correct shared experience of secure urbanization.

The pervasive claims of the need to control encounters in the urban environment have enabled Kelowna's policies and planning processes to produce a limited possibility of appropriate subjective and intersubjective practices, relying on boundaries of public and private, but also civilized and savage, and implicitly homogeneity (in Kelowna, as whiteness) and heterogeneity (diversity). During the public debates over the Comprehensive Development Zone, Jane Jacobs was frequently invoked during the public hearings as a democratic urban theorist, particularly her claim that having diverse "eyes on the street" contributes to public safety. Yet Jacobs (1992: 29-30) also believed in "the drama of civilization versus barbarism in cities," which suggests that "eyes on the street" can be a technique of subjectivization and the delineation of encounters. In the consulting architect's public presentation on the need for the proposed development, contemporary downtown Kelowna was identified with barbed wire fences, graffiti, and abandoned lots, while its urban future was represented by glassy high rise towers. Implicit in these depictions is the notion that the redesign of downtown was not intended to encourage a diversity of urban encounters and experiences, but instead, to define and segregate the strange, in this case those primarily street-involved inhabitants who do not manifest the appropriate modern subjectivity of property-owning and consumption-oriented citizen-subjects.

Kelowna has relied on the emplacement of a very limited notion of political subject, but this very limitation leads to the continual experience of threat that the "uncivilized" can destabilize the boundaries on which Kelowna was founded. The common response to this experience of aporetic instability as threat is to invoke sovereign authority as the necessary stabilizing force, whether through specific planning and policy decisions, or more general efforts to define and impose appropriately "civil" urban behaviour. Yet the pattern in Kelowna suggests that the perceived threat never retreats and the dream of the "desirable" city – neither too big nor too small, neither too rural nor too urban, neither too white nor too diverse – is as impossible as the dream of incontestable sovereign authority (Magnusson 2011a: 7). Further, the continual return to

imaginaries of modern citizen-subjects suggests that the limits of political possibility are being defined by not only as the spatiotemporal ideal of an authentic local community, the ontological ideal of a secure political community, or the epistemological ideal of a fully knowable community, but through a phenomenological ideal of the subject with the authoritative capacity to draw definitive boundaries and govern itself (and subsequently others) by these ideals. Threatening encounters with the “uncivilized” are encounters with the limits of dominant imaginaries of Kelowna and the political limits these imaginaries support.

These characterizations emphasize a belief in encounter and experience as directly accessible and fully trustworthy, reflecting the modern phenomenological configuration of the political subject who can accurately see, interpret, and order her engagements with external phenomena. Yet just as the design bylaws for the Comprehensive Development Zone in downtown Kelowna emphasized creating a common architectural experience by developing and materializing an “overarching concept of layering and screening” (Kelowna 2008d: 6), the patterns of aporetic boundary interaction operate through layering and screening as much as through revealing. Patterns multiply, converge, displace, merge, and disrupt. Ontological configurations are layered over epistemological configurations, are layered over phenomenological configurations, are layered over spatiotemporal configurations, creating moiré patterns of openings and closures. Ontological boundaries intersect epistemological boundaries, intersect phenomenological boundaries, intersect spatiotemporal boundaries, generating not only reflections but also refractions and diffractions.

### **Impossible encounters and encounters with the impossible**

As have many others before, *10 Ideas for Kelowna (Impossible Projects)* suggests that the notions of inter-subjective and contextual encounter can be stretched far beyond the boundaries of the carefully curated set of political “experiences” that are defined and managed by formal institutions of government and by development proposals and projects, all of which envision an ideal of urbanization.

Swintak remembers visiting Kelowna as a child, but came for her residency “with few pre-conceived notions of what Kelowna is about, preferring to pick up on the pulse

of the town through her own explorations and interactions” (Stanford 2012: n.p.). She expressed particular excitement “at being the recent recipient of a loaner bicycle, all the better to get a close-up look at [this] city” (Stanford 2012: n.p.). Swintak’s excitement at a personal encounter with Kelowna was reflected by the excitement of the Alternator Centre for Contemporary Art, which sponsored her residency: “We are especially excited by her commitment to engage local communities and by [the] anticipation that this challenging process will reveal an unpredicted potential of art practices to transform entire social environments” (Alternator 2012). The suggestion that, as an artist “[f]reed, at least conceptually, from the constraints of more conventional representational art, Swintak chooses to use whatever she finds, wherever she is, for inspiration” (Stanford 2012: n.p.) highlights the presumption that individual, subjective encounters with an external world can provide some element of truthful experience. This presumption is reflected in Swintak’s working method, by which a project model is deemed transferable from place to place. While this method results in different aesthetic outcomes, it relies on a theory of the significance of encounter in place: that direct encounter with a community, filtered through the perspective of a creative subject, can generate significant insight. As such, it operates according to familiar phenomenological and epistemological configurations.

However, through her ongoing interest in the impossible, Swintak effectively refracts what might otherwise be a carefully bounded set of assumptions. The *Impossible Projects*, as counter-factual aesthetic propositions, do not offer idealizations of alternative urban futures for Kelowna. They do not seek to solve Kelowna’s real or imagined concerns with urbanization, nor make statements about what an authentic vision of Kelowna would entail. They shift focus from the dominant configurations that lead urbanization to be experienced as a problem that needs a solution. Instead, they intensify, kaleidoscopically, the unspoken affective responses to this dominant experience of urbanization: urbanization encountered as the tension between dreams and threats, and thus as the production and reproduction of experiences of the city as a site of hope and of fear. Faced with these images of impossible urban futures, observers are reminded of the core impossibility of the politics of urbanization, framed as the simultaneous and contradictory experience of a naturalized, self-generated, authentic process (becoming

like the urban) and a process imposed by externalized forces according to an externalized vision (being made like the urban).

The aporetic boundary line is an open space, a hiatus, a pause; there always seems to be an impossible vacancy where the core should be. By asking visitors to imagine encounters with the “impossible,” Swintak opens time and space to diffract the tight limitations of existing experience, limitations that are continually presented as necessary for the appropriate development of Kelowna. However, this does not generate a simple articulation of alternatives, with its dream of escaping boundaries and reproduction of boundaries. Rather, *Impossible Projects* draws attention to the aporetic pause in the dominant pattern whereby the desire for possible alternatives segues into the claim to the authority to designate the necessary future. The focus on the impossible asks observers to refuse, or at least temporarily hold in abeyance, the authority to determine what is possible, necessary, or impossible at any given juncture.

## **BEGIN AGAIN, RETURN AGAIN II: The Indeterminate Boundaries of Political Theory**

### **Arriving at the beginning, almost**

This dissertation began with an engagement with contemporary literature in urban geography, and specifically with the emerging imaginaries of global urban politics that this literature proposes. These works focus on the spatiotemporal and conceptual changes wrought by global urbanization, but importantly, they argue that these changes are political: that they entail changes in structures of authority, access to resources, modes of communal life, and possibilities for the future. These texts are re-read here, not as competing empirical and theoretical accounts of the phenomena gathered under the label urbanization, from which the correct or most accurate account should be chosen, but as a field of practices that together define the boundaries of urbanization. What emerges from this reading is a set of transition narratives: narratives of transitions in urbanization itself, and by extension, in what might be labeled and engaged as politics. This pattern of multiple, over-lapping transition narratives is apparent in both the academic literature on urbanization and in dominant, popular accounts of urbanization in particular places.

These transition narratives function on three levels. First, there is the narrative of transition in the boundaries that defined modern urbanization. These boundaries have been configured in binary terms, and primarily take shape as rural and urban, nature and culture, local and national, tradition and modern. At times a secondary set of boundaries has been used to define modern urbanization, using distinctions between state and market, civilized and savage, homogeneity and heterogeneity. Despite their binary construction, the terms of these boundaries have never simply aligned on one side of a table or the other; rather, they have continually intersected in both common and contradictory ways, at times amplifying each other, and at times attenuating. These boundaries have been made to work, in complex dynamics, to support imaginaries of a formerly clear configuration of how people were located in places. Contemporary accounts of the politics of global urbanization argue that these boundaries of modern urbanization are being irrevocably reconfigured by the processes of global urbanization,

such that they are being rendered irrelevant. The argument encompasses claims of irrelevance of these boundaries in empirical, particularly spatial, terms, but also emphasizes the irrelevance of boundaries themselves in theoretical or analytical terms. This has resulted in a subsequent transition in analytical focus, away from boundaries as a structure that is assumed to enforce false binaries, and towards accounts considered more capable of seeing the constitutive relations, complexity, and interdependence that might not be new, but that are taking new forms in an urban world. Yet these boundaries continue to be put to work – even if just to be identified as what is no longer relevant – to support emerging imaginaries of the unpredictable but transformative reconfiguration of the relations between people and place.

Second, these boundaries of rural and urban, and their many cognates, have not only been used to define modern urbanization, but also to define the possibilities, necessities, and limits of modern politics through their relationship to other, less binary boundaries, such as identity, community, authenticity, security, and vitality. By claiming that these boundaries have been made irrelevant, these accounts of contemporary urbanization argue that modern modes of politics have undergone, or are undergoing, a parallel transition. Modern politics has been structured as simultaneously hierarchical and equivalent relations between citizen-subjects, states, and the international system of states, and thus has both emerged from and participated in specific imaginaries of people in place. Now, the processes and networks of global urbanization are said to be shaped by, and shaping, modes of politics that are still uncertain, just emerging, but more diffuse: less defined by the psycho-subjective boundaries of the individual self, the geopolitical boundaries of the state, or the legal, economic, and institutional boundaries that structure the international system of states. In the face of the uncertainty or undecidability caused by this political transition, analytical work is increasingly withdrawing from modern categories of rural and urban, nature and culture, traditional and modern. However, accounts of the transformative politics of contemporary global urbanization continue to depend on key categories that have been used to define modern politics, such as authenticity, community, identity, citizenship, security, and implicitly or explicitly, authority. These accounts may seek to reconfigure and rehabilitate these categories into forms deemed more suitable to the emerging complexity of global urbanization; in such

cases, the *content* of the account uses these categories to (re)draw the boundaries that define politics in the urban world. However, even when accounts argue that such terms are as irrelevant as the boundaries of modern urbanization, the *form* of argument tends to depend upon these boundaries in one form or another to define a field of politics, most commonly through practices of authorization that remain consistent with the constitution of modern sovereign authority.

As the uncertainties of contemporary global urbanization and contemporary politics multiply, attempts to develop adequate accounts increasingly claim transitions at a third level: in the very spatiotemporalities, ontologies, epistemologies, and phenomenologies of urbanization and of politics. Throughout this work I have referred to these as the metanarratives of transition that divide and structure the complexity of the perceived problem into four distinct configurations, held apart by boundaries of analytical division and held together by boundaries that define the limits of conceivability and comprehensibility. The very uncertainty of geographic and political imaginaries generated by the perceived transformations of urbanization drives the tendency to use these four metanarratives as the ultimate or eventual boundaries of the possibilities and limits of authorization itself: the authority to determine the boundaries of urbanization and of politics is claimed as derivative from the capacity to determine the boundaries of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology, as the boundaries that enable any concrete claims about the world at all.

The unexamined question in many of these accounts, and the question that forms the core problematic engaged by this dissertation, is the basis for making judgments or determinations about the relevant phenomena of either urbanization or politics, if both are in the middle of a comprehensive, radical transformation into something new. The engagement with this question focuses on the ways that these three forms of transition narratives depend on complicated boundary practices that attempt to define – at ever-increasing levels of complexity and theoretic sophistication – the possibilities and limits of urbanization and of politics. Regardless of what else might be articulated in an account of the politics of contemporary global urbanization, it seems that claims about the need to transition beyond boundaries as an analytical concern merely serve to return us to the question of boundaries, not least of which the spatiotemporal boundaries that define the

movement inherent in transition narratives. While attempting to define the transitions of urbanization and explain how they work in place, these dominant accounts of urbanization as transition provide limited capacity to engage the complex dynamics of change and return that are apparent in boundary constructions.

This pattern of a claim to transition beyond, only to witness the re-emergence of what was thought to be superseded – a progress that always returns, a momentum that always circles back – is characteristic of the *aporia*. Dominant criticisms of the figure of the *aporia* hold that it is a negative form of critique, not a positive account of politics; that it is trapped in outmoded, binary forms of thought; that its central void allows for modes of political idealization and authorization; or that its structure of undecidability enforces a Weberian moment of necessary political decision. Against these criticisms, the work here focuses on the *aporia* as a form of boundary that simultaneously separates and unites, creating both the need for, and impossibility of, a decision to unify or prioritize. An *aporetic* boundary is inherently unstable (Derrida 1993), generating the desire for sovereign security while simultaneously confirming its impossibility (Tedesco 2012). This uncertainty creates a “hiatus” (Foucault 2002:371), a spatial opening and temporal pause prior to boundary (re)configuration. While beginning this analysis of *aporetic* boundaries with Derrida and Foucault, I have made no effort to remain faithful to the entirety of their work on or usage of the *aporia*. Rather, I have extracted features of the *aporetic* logic that they identify, and used those to develop a methodological approach to understanding how *aporetic* boundaries work in context. Fundamentally, the logic of *aporetic* boundaries generates a characteristic pattern of oscillation between security and insecurity, and thus a characteristic pattern of acts of authority to secure the boundary, which necessarily fail, in turn generating an increased desire for authority. As attempts to secure distinctions within complex, proliferating phenomena, these boundaries cannot remain stable over time. However, the central undecidability of *aporetic* boundaries also entails that this return to authority faces its own limitations, which are confronted again in the open spacetime of the hiatus.

To understand how these complex boundary practices contribute to the pattern of transition narratives that return continually to their beginnings, I focus on how they emerge and circulate in both the academic literature on urban geography and in the mid-

sized city of Kelowna, which, by all accounts, is undergoing an intensive experience of urbanization. The first and second essays in this dissertation demonstrate in broad terms the uncertainty that contemporary urbanization is bringing to these configurations, first through the urban geography literature, and then, as an overlay, through an intensive encounter with narratives and imaginaries of urbanization in Kelowna. Within each individual focus, and from this overlay of both together, patterns of intensification and divergence emerge. The third essay pauses from the momentum of transition narratives to reside, temporarily, in one of the gaps that emerges from the moiré pattern of the first two essays, namely, the intensive focus in Kelowna on boundaries of identity, community, authenticity, and security, a focus that is largely missing from the urban geography literature. This essay suggests that debates over how to redefine or reappropriate these common boundaries represent a particular way in which the narrative figure of Kelowna grapples with urbanization not just as uncertain boundaries of community in place (and hence geographic uncertainty), but as uncertain boundaries of appropriate or desirable ways to live together (and hence political uncertainty). The patterns of progress and return that emerge from these engagements with uncertain boundaries suggest the presence of a dynamic problem animated by an aporia. The third essay therefore introduces a methodology for seeing aporetic boundaries not as objects of analysis that exist as such, but as practices that produce distinctive patterns of reflection, refraction, and diffraction as boundaries co-constitute, converge, and diverge in multi-spatial and multi-temporal encounters. The fourth and final essay shifts focus, slightly, to follow the contextualized reflections, refractions, and diffractions of aporetic boundary interactions within a field where the dominant imaginaries of Kelowna's urbanization are debated: the Official Community Plan and the proposals for significant new development projects, which, by promoting claims about the sustainable urbanization of Kelowna, effectively make claims about appropriate, desirable, and *secure* forms of political identity and political community in Kelowna.

### **Proliferating aporetic effects**

This dissertation offers a contextualized account of how the dynamics of transformation and solidification of urbanization and politics can be understood not as

transition narratives but as related and relational effects of the logic of aporetic boundaries. The focus of the analytical work is progressively narrowed, from a broad engagement with urban geography literature, to a broad engagement with the narratives of urbanization in Kelowna, to a tight, intensive focus on the OCP and development plans. This process of narrowing does not, however, follow through as a linear argument, but instead both emerges from patterns of boundary interactions, and, by over-layering different points and degrees of focus, enables other patterns of boundary interactions to emerge. In particular, the more restricted focus of the final essay, on the dominant policies and plans that are meant to guide urbanization Kelowna, enable both the ability to compare a similar set of textual and visual material and the ability to extend into a range of expansive engagements. This comparative reading of what are proposed as distinctly different, even incompatible visions of desirable, sustainable urbanization highlights the common logic that operates throughout. While many of these boundaries are given the appearance of binary categories – rural and urban, nature and culture, civilized and savage, traditional or modern – they are woven together in complicated ways. The aporetic logic of the boundaries means that these categories are both co-constitutive *and* mutually threatening, proliferating in relations of intensification and distribution.

Further, this specific contextualization in Kelowna highlights the fundamental tensions that vibrate through all three modalities of boundary practices (boundaries of urbanization, boundaries of politics, boundaries of authorization). On the one hand, it makes visible that, despite transition narratives, the four problematiqués of spacetime, ontology, epistemology and phenomenology are consistently mobilized in terms of the dominant, modern configuration. On the other hand, this contextualization of aporetic boundary practices within Kelowna also highlights the unreliable bases of these configurations. They are intensely vulnerable to the insecurities and undecidabilities that are characteristic of aporetic boundaries. The insecurity of these boundaries intensifies as the different unstable configurations are used to support each other to enable claims about distinct and stable configurations of urbanization, politics, and authority. This inter/subjective, visceral experience of intense insecurity generates the regulative function of the idealizations of each different ‘model’ of development, and the injunction

to renewed authority that emerges from the demonizations of each model. By following the patterns of their effects within and beyond this field – patterns of reconfiguration of dominant boundaries of urbanization; patterns of repetition of dominant boundaries of identity, community, authenticity, and authority; patterns of claims about political spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenology – it is possible to see these practices as attempts to define the possibility, necessity, and limits not just of urbanization but of politics.

However, clearly aporetic boundary practices and their patterns of effects operate in disparate and pervasive contexts, not only through the apparently ‘discursive’ material of such plans and projects but also through practices that are more easily recognized as real, everyday, material interactions as political productions. In other words, it becomes possible to use the aporetic method to look at a broader range of practices in Kelowna. One effect of the uncertainty of the boundaries of urbanization in Kelowna has been the familiar, endless debates about whether or not Kelowna finally counts as a real city. They suggest that urbanization, understood etymologically and popularly as the process of becoming like “the urban,” reminds many places that they are never urban enough. This insecurity over its urban status says less about Kelowna as a singular place and more about the way that narratives of urbanization work with and against modern accounts of the political security derived from knowing one’s place in geographic space and linear time. The repetition of these narratives demonstrates how the boundaries of modern urbanization and sovereign politics reproduce in tandem, and this aporetic pattern of return troubles the parallel transition narratives of contemporary urbanization and contemporary politics.

A second effect of the uncertainty of the boundaries of urbanization in Kelowna has been to emplace and displace, simultaneously, dominant configurations of modern politics and emergent practices that attempt to reconfigure these boundaries. As one example, which returns to Bernard Avenue in downtown Kelowna, the dominant narrative of urban development here has previously excluded any recognition of Indigenous presence. However, the recent “revitalization” of downtown Kelowna now prominently includes Syilx language and public artworks by Syilx artists. The artwork includes *Siya?* (Chief Saskatoon Berry), a bush “constructed of hundreds of individual

shoots,” which represents the “strength that results from being in one place for extended generations ... as the Syilx have resided on this land for thousands of years.” The largely decontextualized use of Syilx cultural imagery is consistent with neocolonial urban development and neoliberal place-making. However, these representations unsettle claims that Western settlement and urbanization define the configuration of politics that determines place-making in this place. By asserting an unceded connection between land, language, and people, they assert a different configuration of the politics of place in time.

As a second example, Kelowna has continually displaced visible minorities from its self-imaginary, despite the fact that its identity as an orcharding community has always relied on cycles of immigrant and minority laborers. The temporary, seasonal migrant workers, primarily from Mexico and Jamaica, who now ensure the viability of agriculture in the region, are granted a precarious place consistent with both sovereign state authority and neoliberal urban economics. Yet these workers are temporary in some modes, and not others: while resident for only 8 months at a time, most of these workers return year after year, often to the same farm where they live and work. With the help of local organizations such as Radical Action with Migrants in Agriculture (RAMA), these workers are increasing their visibility through public events in the city center (Figure 2), simultaneously putting down their own roots in this place while emphasizing the uprootedness of their life in Kelowna. Through everyday practices of being present and organized practices that draw attention to their transnational continuity and discontinuity of presence, yet another configuration of the politics of place in time emerges.

These productions lay claim to seemingly incompatible but clearly coexistent boundaries of the space and time, forms, definitions, and practices of both “the urban” and “the political.” These indeterminate enactments of place generate the experience of insecure urban status as the experience of insecure political community, which generates in turn both reliance on and skepticism of dominant configurations of politics. None of these boundaries exist exclusively: all are operative, and all are insecure. The effect is to destabilize claims of Kelowna as a singular “place” occupying a stable spacetime, ontological status, epistemological category, and broadly phenomenological experience within a single, shared political condition organized by the transformations of global urbanization.

This contextualized focus on the aporetic logic within Kelowna highlights the multiplicity, heterogeneity, and contingency of *urbanization* as a complex of boundary practices that participate in efforts to define and engage *politics*. In this sense, an aporetic analysis provides a “positive” account of politics: it gives us the tools to provide accounts of the generation of new practices, new institutional, constitutional, and material forms, and new spatiotemporal configurations. But rather than attempt a definitive determination of what is *political* about these practices, it seeks to rest in the aporetic hiatus that holds such determinations, temporarily at least, in abeyance. Instead, an aporetic reading of urbanization is politically effective – in that it effectively accounts for distinctive political features, and in that it performatively enables us to engage with and effect transformations in possible political openings – without relying on claims about fixed configurations of and relations between political spacetime, ontology, epistemology and phenomenology.

An aporetic analysis does not offer an alternative configuration of politics but rather directs attention to the way that the inherent insecurities of these configurations generate and undermine transition narratives. It emphasizes the political possibility of the hiatus, understood as a complicated spatiotemporal dynamic, whereby the emplacement of one boundary practice does not entail the linear displacement of another practice. While pursued here in relation to narratives of global urbanization, the aporetic method is a productive approach to problematics within contemporary political studies where the boundaries of modern politics persist in troubling ways, such as global environmental politics and the boundaries of nature/culture, or global decolonization and the boundaries of savage/civilized. An aporetic analysis helps clarify how myriad inter-related boundaries are produced in unstable configurations to simultaneously define and undermine the parameters of politics and its limits.

As such, the aporetic method of boundary analysis can be used to productively engage a range of emplaced and displaced practices and proliferating patterns and effects. As the aporetic logic plays not just with boundaries of modern urbanization, and with the boundaries of modern politics, but with the traditional means through which these boundaries can be located, naturalized, defined, and experienced, it is crucial to recognize

that the boundaries drawn are not consistent from field to field. Nor are they experienced or understood in a consistent way from place to place, not the least because any determination of place is, in part, an effect of specific, contextualized boundary practices. For aporetic analyses to trace patterns of political effects and affects, they will have to be continually emplaced and contextualized.

### **Political theory in the hiatus**

An analytic focus on aporetic boundary practices places us always in the hiatus between politics and its limits: its enclosures, its naturalizations, its depoliticizations. As suggested along the way, to engage with the problem of aporetic boundary practices, and the play of possibility, necessity, and impossibility, is necessarily to engage the constitution and limit of modern accounts of how spacetime, ontology, epistemology and phenomenology divide the infinite existent and possible phenomena of the world. In other words, it is to engage the constitution and limits of politics, not simply as modes of living together, but as practices of the most basic acts of authorization, resonating as this word does with both the figure of authority and the practice of authorship.

The primary focus here has been on the specific interplay between boundaries of urbanization and of politics. This dissertation uses the uncertainties over contemporary global urbanization as a defined site to engage the boundaries of possibility and impossibility for political thought and engagement: for the *work* of politics. This work has not been pursued to argue that the logic of the aporia offers a better, more accurate account of the strange new politics of an urban world; such an empirical, positivist form of argument is inconsistent with the aporetic logic of the analytical problem. However, nor does this work entail that nothing has changed, that contemporary politics now is just as modern politics was then; patently, such a claim would require confusing an imaginary of a stable political configuration for an actually existing political world (Latour 1993). Such imaginaries of urbanization and of politics have not captured the complexity of life together in the past and do not capture the complexity of life together now, and yet they are continually idealized as desirable or demonized as threatening. The aporetic mode of analysis identifies these dynamics of repetition, reproduction, and circulation as animated by the regulative ideal.

This regulative structure, which attempts to bring certainty and security to the uncertainties of urbanization, and of politics, suggests a necessary re-contextualization of the preceding investigation. The work shifts, from the field of contemporary urban geography to the field of theoretical and methodological problems of politics that has been taking shape for a very long time – at least since the start of political modernity. The arguments here were not developed through a direct engagement with this field for a range of reasons, from not wanting to support the disciplinary boundaries of political theory by reproducing the historical or contemporary canon, from not wanting to extricate the political theoretical work engaged here from the context from which it arises, the very specific, homely and unhomely context of life as a settler-identified resident of an odd little quasi-city with big city dreams. Yet when shifted, the arguments are deeply contextualized, if implicitly, within dominant, and often just as implicit, articulations of the possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities of modern politics. The limits of politics as authorization - whether through claims about the ability to name the categories, the ability to be a self-authorizing subject rather than merely subject to authority, the ability to meet the uncertainty of the world with the capacity for regulative certainty, the ability to remain authentic in a dis-encharmed world – such configurations of the possibilities and limits of politics form the basis for claims of a coherent canon of modern political theory. The repetitions stretch further back, beyond temporal boundaries that attempt to designate ‘the modern’ as a particular, coherent, and reliable configuration of political time, as repetitions of a tension between idealized models of political communities versus actual, material forms of political life make clear. Despite the limit experience engaged in Kelowna, the limits of configurations of politics begin to feel inescapable, which of course, through the aporetic logic, only serves to generate dreams of escape.

It might be possible to see other contextualizations as sites of escape, or other lines of analysis as methods of escape, or even of escaping the dynamic of escape. It would be just as possible to see other contextualizations or lines of analysis as sites to put into boundary relations with an aporetic analysis, to observe what patterns of reflection, refraction, or diffraction emerge. Given the apparent limits of the configurations of modern politics, and the limit experiences that these have contributed to this engagement

with the aporetic political logic of the boundaries of urbanization, it might be particularly effective to stage encounters with methods and sites that pose their own limits to modern political configurations. Thus, aporetic engagements with contemporary feminist analyses of bodies, gender, and sexuality, or with science and technology studies, or border security studies, might offer dynamic new patterns of configurations: configurations of the over-determined modern boundaries they seek to under-determine, of characteristic boundaries of politics (identity, authenticity, community, and so on) as reconfigured and challenged within these sites, and of configurations of the boundaries of spacetime, ontology, epistemology, and phenomenologies as they emerge from this work. Emerging from the work on urbanization in Kelowna undertaken here, I am inclined to push and pull an aporetic method of analysis into an unsettling engagement with the pressing need to reconfigure colonial relations into new modes of multi-spatial, multi-temporal, trans-local and trans-subjective political relations. Such work might, with difficulty, shift from efforts to claim non-Western, non-modern ontologies or epistemologies as foundations for new forms of relations, and instead seek to identify patterns of reflection, refraction, and diffraction that emerge when multiple, non-determinative boundaries of the capacity to authorize boundaries are put into play together in a singular context of multiplicity. This work could proceed in a place like the Okanagan Valley – the traditional, trans-border land of the Syilx people, a historic French Mission settlement, a British colony, a shiny city of glass, and a dusty network of farms sustained by the labour of temporary, trans-national workers – or it could shift to a different contextualization entirely. With each shift, different configurations of possibilities, necessities, and impossibilities may well emerge, proliferating patterns of encounter with the boundaries of politics and its limits.

However, this aporetic analysis also suggests that the constitutive hiatus might be engaged further, and more explicitly, as a site of creative possibilities for political engagements with the impossible. To offer the hiatus as a site of further work is not to lay claim to a new imaginary of the spatiotemporality, ontology, epistemology, or phenomenology of politics. It is not, that is to say, intended to offer a definitive statement on the spaces and times, forms, categories, or experiences of political imagination that can possibly, or even necessarily, emerge from the obsessive dynamics of progress and

return. The problem with notions of *imagination*, and the emerging constructions of *imaginaries* that such acts generate, is that they continue, at an inaudibly low but perceptible and thus operative frequency, to set into complex interplays the boundaries that are at issue, particular boundaries of the self-authorizing subject, boundaries of ideal versus material. These boundaries re-establish politics as a practice of pre-determination, an act of securing or stabilizing, if only through an imaginary, that can subsequently open a path beyond uncertainty. Thus a turn to political imagination, despite its welcome appearance of allowing people to take charge of possible political futures, becomes another incitement to make another statement. The hiatus suggests the need for creative possibilities that are not bound by what can be ‘imagined,’ with its overtones of separating only to be impelled to traverse the resulting void. Figured here most consistently through the *Impossible Projects* that were proposed in Kelowna, the challenge of residing in the hiatus without panic and closure is engaged in aesthetic terms. *Impossible Projects* cannot be presented as a *success*, if the goal is assumed to be a perfect refusal of decision or determination. Such a goal, the aporetic logic suggests, is impossible. *Impossible Projects* does, however, open multiple possibilities for encountering – conceptually, materially, viscerally, creatively – the hiatus as a site where new work can emerge.

In a fitting, kaleidoscopically dense act of layered referencing, the problem this dissertation has sought to engage is captured in a quotation of Deleuze, presented by Closs Stephens (2011) in an engagement with Walker (2010). The problem, posed in these echoing terms, is “not a problem of getting people to express themselves, but of providing little gaps of solitude and silence in which they might eventually find something to say” (Deleuze 1995: 129). Despite the noisy plenitude typically identified with imaginaries of the urban, and despite the constant pressures to enclose the creative, emergent energy identified with imaginaries of the urban into a carefully bound and managed city, urbanization as a dynamic and unstable contemporary condition continually offers moments of under-determination (Magnusson 2011a), of openness, and even of solitude and silence. The figure of the hiatus – at once spatiotemporal and necessarily unbounded – offers a theorization of the possibilities of these gaps of solitude and silence, as well as a theorization of the pressures to move on too fast, to make one’s

statement prematurely, pre-determinatively. In the end, the determinative act may be impossible to entirely avoid, but the hiatus, and the patterns and textures of reflection, refraction, and diffraction that people create through their multiple aporetic boundary practices, suggest that other modes of political work may yet emerge, one pause at a time, by learning to reside in these moments without panic, together.

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### **Internet Resources**

NB: Websites for the different developments have, at times, changed over the years of research. In particular, website revisions for development projects coincide with new lot offerings, emphasizing their role as marketing devices. In most cases, hard copies of sites were downloaded while they were live, and continue to be used. In cases where material is no longer available, those pages are dated to their last known date. Every effort has been made to clarify if a referenced Web page is no longer available for public access; in this case, hard copies are available on request.

**Avalon Alliance:** <http://avalonalliance.org/>. Accessed periodically between 2008 and 2015. Unavailable on-line from about 2010-2012.

Avalon 2009: All pages available hardcopy, but are longer available on the re-launched site.

Comprehensive Ecovillage Development Projects: <http://avalonalliance.org/sustainable-development/comprehensive-ecovillage-development-projects/>

New Millennium Market Trends: <http://avalonalliance.org/investment-giving/new-millennium-market-trends/>

Planning and Development Themes: <http://avalonalliance.org/world-centre-project/planning-and-development-themes/>

Project Background: <http://avalonalliance.org/world-centre-project/project-background/>

Project Vision, Mission and Goals: <http://avalonalliance.org/world-centre-project/project-vision-mission-and-goals/>

**BlueGreen Living Communities:** [www.livingcommunities.ca](http://www.livingcommunities.ca). Accessed periodically between 2009 and 2015. No longer available on-line. Hard copies available on request.

Environmental Sustainability: [www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/environmental-sustainability](http://www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/environmental-sustainability)

Facebook December 4: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/bluegreen-living-communities/we-are-democratizing-real-estate-development-featured-in-the-kelowna-capital-new/190010334891>. December 4, 2009.

Facebook February 17: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/bluegreen-living-communities/agricultural-urbanism-new-ruralism-new-urbanism-oh-my/312347909891>. February 17, 2010.

Facebook June 29: <https://www.facebook.com/notes/bluegreen-living-communities/conceptual-practical-and-the-in-between/408630289891>. June 29, 2010.

Financial Sustainability: [www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/financial-sustainability/](http://www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/financial-sustainability/)

History: [www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/living-communities/the-story/history/](http://www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/living-communities/the-story/history/)

Home: [www.livingcommunities.ca](http://www.livingcommunities.ca)

Living Communities: [www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/living-communities/](http://www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/living-communities/)

Our Values: [www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/](http://www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/)

Social Sustainability: [www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/social-sustainability/](http://www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/our-values/social-sustainability/)

The Story: [www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/the-story/](http://www.livingcommunities.ca/pages/the-story/)

**EKISTICS:** <http://ekistics.com/>. Accessed periodically between 2009 and 2015.

Kettle Valley: <http://ekistics.com/project/village-of-kettle-valley/>

How We Work - Principled: <http://ekistics.com/how-we-work/>

What We Do: Cited text is from a previous version of this page.

Who We Are: <http://ekistics.com/who-we-are/>

Wilden/a: Cited text is from a previous version of this page; hard copy available on request.

Wilden/b: <http://ekistics.com/project/wilden/>

**Kettle Valley:** <http://www.kettlevalley.com/>. Accessed periodically between 2008 and 2015.

About Kelowna: No longer available on-line. Hard copy available on request.

A Brief History:

[http://www.kettlevalley.com/blog/post/25/A\\_Brief\\_History\\_of\\_the\\_Village\\_of\\_Kettle\\_Valley/](http://www.kettlevalley.com/blog/post/25/A_Brief_History_of_the_Village_of_Kettle_Valley/)

Architectural Styles:

[http://www.kettlevalley.com/blog/post/31/9\\_Diverse\\_Architectural\\_Styles\\_In\\_Kelowna\\_s\\_Best\\_Community/](http://www.kettlevalley.com/blog/post/31/9_Diverse_Architectural_Styles_In_Kelowna_s_Best_Community/)

Community: No longer available on-line. Hard copy available on request.

Location: <http://www.kettlevalley.com/location>

Lots and Homes: <http://www.kettlevalley.com/lots-and-homes/lots/the-highlands/>

Nature and Community: <http://www.kettlevalley.com/community/>

Video Transcript: No longer available on-line. Hard copy of transcript available on request.

Village of Kettle Valley: No longer available on-line. Hard copy available on request.

**Wilden:** <http://www.wilden.ca/>. Accessed periodically between 2008 and 2015.

Location, Maps, and Amenities: <http://www.wilden.ca/kelowna-location-maps-amenities>

Nature and Wildlife: <http://www.wilden.ca/nature-and-wildlife>

Parks, Trails and Activities: <http://www.wilden.ca/parks-trails>

Visit Wilden: <http://www.wilden.ca/visit-wilden>

