

## Commoning Landscapes from Home

Building queer ecological commons online at a time of COVID–19

### Abstract

The coronavirus pandemic has limited the ability to undertake *in situ* ethnographic fieldwork. Digital methods have instead proven popular with researchers gathering qualitative data over the course of the pandemic. Digital methods nevertheless present challenges for studies that have traditionally relied upon experiencing landscapes *in situ*.

This paper traces some of the epistemological, methodological, and ethical shifts that have taken place within my PhD project as a result of the global pandemic. Within my project, I am investigating how contemporary queer communities have established and maintained inclusive and sustainable commons landscapes. Originally, I had envisaged using *in situ* ethnographic methods to research experiences of commoning landscapes amongst case study queer communities; however, I have instead embraced a queerly scavenged combination of oral history interviewing, autoethnographic methods, and digital community archiving to meet my original research aims.

Within this paper, I highlight how commoning can shift from a research focus to an ethical and methodological approach at times of community precarity. In doing so, I question the resilience of an *in situ*/remote binary when researching commoning landscapes. I argue that my new research positioning has enabled this research project to lie more clearly within the theoretical tenets of queer and feminist commoning—particularly in destabilising dualistic patterns of thinking. I contend that digital methods can support commoning landscapes; however, I also raise some of the challenges of using digital methods in the context of researching more–than–human landscape ecologies.

This paper adds to the emerging literature that extends feminist new materialisms and queer ecologies towards commons and landscape studies. I ultimately advocate for researchers to not only consider methodological feasibility when in times of crisis, but to reconsider what role the research(er) has in future world–making.

ANDREW  
M A R K S

UNIVERSITY OF EDINBURGH

## Introduction

For the past two-and-a-half-years, I have been researching queer commons landscapes from my Edinburgh flat. When I began my doctoral research project in 2019, I was unprepared for the transformations that my research would be forced to undergo to remain viable in the wake of the global coronavirus pandemic. And yet, despite the methodological challenges triggered by the pandemic, my research aims nevertheless remain the same. The ongoing pandemic has instead catalysed a series of significant epistemological, methodological, and ethical transformations within my research. These transformations have led me to scavenge a new set of methodological approaches in collaboration with multiple queer commoning groups, including community-based archiving, oral history interviews and autoethnography. These new methods are used with the same intention of supporting queer groups wishing to further common their landscapes and equally, for groups wishing to queer their commons landscapes.

This article traces some of the conceptual shifts that have occurred when trying to satisfy my original research questions without the opportunity to engage with traditional *in situ* ethnographic fieldwork within commons landscapes. This paper also highlights how restructuring the project has allowed my new methods to destabilise dualistic patterns of thinking around what it means to research *in situ* or remotely. Through questioning this binary, I contend that this research further resides within the theoretical tenets of this project's focus—'commoning landscapes'. Whilst I argue that digital methods can support new ways of commoning landscapes, I also emphasise some of the challenges of using digital qualitative methods when researching more-than-human ecologies. This paper adds to the emerging literature that extends feminist new materialisms towards commons and landscape studies, and ultimately advocates for researchers to not only consider methodological feasibility when in times of crisis, but to reconsider more broadly what role the research(er) has in future world-making.

## Queer ecology, commoning and *in situ* methods

Within my doctoral research project, I am examining how the exclusion of gender and sexual minority groups within mainstream environmentalism can be overcome at a time of climate change. Guiding this research is a combination of two energising yet hitherto distinct fields of study, commons studies and queer ecology. I aim to identify practical 'commoning' patterns (Helfrich 2015) utilised by LGBTQ+ communities in order to aid the development of a more inclusive praxis for the sustainable restructuring of landscapes. As I shall explain in more depth, I have associated inclusive praxes of reshaping landscapes — where landscapes are understood as both cultural and natural forms — with the phrase 'commoning landscapes'.

Over the past three decades, ‘commons’ have been suggested as a ‘third way’ of negotiating economies outside of private and public property regimes (Feeny et al. 1990; Huron 2018), and the term continues to inspire new ways of responding to social inequalities and climate breakdown. Traditionally, commons are understood as community-based economies that support resources to be co-managed by all individuals within a group. ‘Commoning’ rather describes the active ‘doing’ of the commons—of maintaining relationships with shared understandings of value, needs and production (Linebaugh 2008). Commoning is a relational process that centralises mutualism (Linebaugh 2008), reciprocity (Esposito 2010) and redistribution (Susser 2017) within cultural reproduction (Hansen et al. 2016, 11). Despite the political momentum that commoning has garnered amongst academics and activists, commons scholars have emphasised that it is nevertheless “an undertheorized concept” (Helfrich 2015, 53), due to a lack of clarity around how commoning is practiced and structured by communities every day.

My research investigates one gap within cultures of commoning, specifically LGBTQ+ inclusive practices of commoning landscapes. Within this project, I am drawing upon the body of theory known as ‘queer ecology.’ Queer ecology combines queer theory and environmental studies to challenge heteronormativity within environmentalism (Mortimer–Sandilands and Erickson 2010). Utilising ‘queer’ as both a noun and a verb, queer ecology applies queer theory’s deconstructive critical focus to ecology. In doing so, queer ecology challenges the socially mediated process of naturalisation and its associated socionatural exclusions. Cultural geographer Matthew Gandy has suggested that through ‘queering’ ecology, scholars and activists can develop new understandings of how materiality and metaphors are experienced and offer spaces where “different kinds of cultural or political alliances might emerge” (2012, 740). In the context of commoning, queer ecological approaches appear to offer opportunities for challenging political exclusions; thus, through bridging these two fields, I ask how queer ecology could transform understandings and approaches to commoning landscapes.

To research how queer ecology might support commoning landscapes, I originally aimed to undertake *in situ* ethnographic fieldwork with a prominent countercultural queer group called the Radical Faeries. Radical Faeries are eco-friendly groups of queers who live in permanent communes or come together at temporary gatherings. Founded in the 1970s in the United States by gay men inspired by lesbian separatist movements and New Age spiritualities, Radical Faeries have been suggested by queer ecology scholars as presenting interesting intersections between intentional eco-communities and queer countercultures (Sandilands 2005, Bauman 2019). Whitney Bauman has suggested that groups such as the Radical Faeries give “more chances to think about different possibilities for becoming” (2019, 117) in the context of emerging queer ecologies. Fascinated by how these ‘different possibilities’ could inform the practicalities of commoning landscapes, I had

intended to use ethnographic methods to investigate what lessons Radical Faeries could offer for communities wishing to undergo a more inclusive commoning.

Ethnographic fieldwork was chosen as a result of methodological precedents within commons studies, landscape studies and queer ecology. Ethnographic fieldwork has been utilised to highlight the ways in which communities shape and are shaped by the surrounding environment through everyday life. My fieldwork was to involve a year-long period of multi-sited ethnographic engagements (Marcus 1995) with Radical Faerie landscapes. These would have included the organic farm in Somerset and the estate in Northumberland, complete with eleventh-century castle, that are rented for temporary UK gatherings, as well as the group's permanent French 'sanctuary', which is set in several hectares of land within a nature reserve in the Vosges mountains. Through ethnographic fieldwork, I planned to become familiar with what Malinowski famously termed the "imponderabilia of actual life" (1961, 18) that sustain these queer ecologies/commons landscapes—a quotidian perspective that has been suggested by Hansen et al. (2016) as critical for the location and cultivation of commoning.

My conviction of the appropriateness of *in situ* ethnographic fieldwork as a methodological framework was also reinforced through my reading of the associated literature, especially studies that position ethnographic methods as offering an escape from dualistic ways of thinking that polarise Western thought to the detriment of socionatural ecologies. As with feminist critiques, queer positionings critique dualisms that reinforce normative hierarchies of value, such as 'culture/nature,' 'human/animal,' 'male/female,' 'mind/body,' 'reason/emotion,' and 'subject/object' (Plumwood 1993; Gaard 1997). Deconstructing dualisms is also central within commons research, and Mary Hufford (2016) has argued that when researching commons, methods must bridge the existing dualisms that "occlude" visions of commons and commoning (641). Hufford suggests that commons research requires a commitment to the phenomenological experience of "world-making from within" (641), a commitment that she argues can be reconciled through ethnographic methods. Ethnographic fieldwork, she argues, locates researchers and participants in common worlds that are established through participation and destabilise the mirage of social scientific objectivity that supports those subject/object dualisms at the centre of contemporary commons critique.

### **Engaging with landscapes: fieldwork and more-than-human ecologies**

Although the commons have previously been discussed in relation to landscapes, what falls within the signifier 'landscape' is frequently unclear. Whilst landscapes have often been understood in visual and ecological terms, scholars have also emphasised the social means of producing distinct landscapes, particularly through processes, practices and embodiment. Landscapes have subsequently been

repositioned as co-productions of human and non-human agents—as living ‘scenes’ reflecting society (Swyngedouw, 1999; Tuan, 1977).

Beyond the physical geography and ecology of a landscape, geographer Kenneth Olwig (2002) has advocated for acknowledging the “substantive” legal and ideological compositions of landscapes that reciprocally inform the socionatural boundary-making practices that construct landscapes. These institutional interpretations of landscapes are heavily indebted to the Nordic-Germanic etymological origin of the ‘*Landschaft*,’ whereby landscapes historically communicated the physical manifestations of customary social values, themselves instituted through common law within a community (Olwig 2002, 40). Olwig suggests that it is vital to recognise the political boundaries of a landscape: its constitution, governance and use rights (2015, 229). Through doing so, Olwig connects landscape ecologies with the socio-political parameters of the commons and argues for viewing a “commons *as* landscape” (2003, 15). Olwig contends that a landscape-based interpretation of the commons should incorporate the changing social relationships that bind conceptions of place, land, polity and community, alongside the ecological implications of these relationships.

Together with Olwig’s recommendation to attend to the customary parameters of landscapes, my understanding of landscapes within this project has also resonated with Erik Swyngedouw’s definition, where ‘landscape’ signifies socio-environmental relations that reflect historical-geographical conflicts and socio-spatial dimensions of power (1999, 461). Swyngedouw casts landscapes as living anti-dualist expressions of societies and ecologies. Like naturecultures (Haraway, 2003), landscapes collapse nature/culture dualisms through emphasising the ecological ramifications of social change and *vice versa*. Here, the spatial boundaries of a landscape are always in contention. The signifier ‘landscape’ suggests a constant process of land-shaping as much as it does a spatially situated object for analysis. Commons landscapes emphasise the active socionatural processes undertaken by assemblages of human and more-than-human agents that reciprocally shape a commons and the lives of its inhabitants, including the means through which identity, boundaries and everyday stewardship are conceptualised and concretised.

Following this anti-dualist interpretation of landscapes, it has been important within this project to engage the more-than-human ecologies that collaboratively shape the landscape. However, this simultaneous attunement to both human and more-than-human subjects is not without its methodological complications. Patrick Bresnihan (2015) has suggested the reason that everyday practices and relations underpinning commons have been under-researched is precisely because of the methodological inability to identify and describe socionatural commons relations within landscapes (96). However, Bresnihan praises those anthropologists using ethnographic methods for their ability to explore human and more-than-human sociality within commons. Through ethnographic

methods that were attentive to more-than-human sociality, I aimed to document the imponderabilia of community-living amongst different Radical Faerie landscapes and reveal some of the embodied *relata* that support quotidian practices of more-than-human commoning—the resource management, conservation and spiritual rituals situated within the landscapes (Bresnihan 2015; Nightingale 2019).

### **COVID-19: digital ethnography and commoning landscapes from home**

Unsurprisingly, the COVID-19 pandemic severely disrupted my plans to investigate commons landscapes amongst the Radical Faeries through traditional ethnographic fieldwork. Despite a commitment to *in situ* research, the impossibility of ethnographic fieldwork alongside financial and time constraints led me to believe that I must reconcile the theoretical underpinnings of queer ecology and commoning landscapes with digital methods in order to complete my doctoral research from home. By the summer of 2020, many researchers had begun to engage in “anthropology from home” (Góralaska, 2020, 50), and digital ethnographic methods had proven popular with researchers seeking to gather qualitative data over the pandemic. However, as Góralaska and other digital ethnographers have described, digital fieldwork should not be seen as a “universal glue” (ibid. 50) to resolve the ruptures within fieldwork, but as an opportunity to open new spaces for researchers to engage with participants.

Prior to the global pandemic, I had ironically narrowed the scope of my research to avoid investigating how so-called ‘digital commons’ interact with commoning landscapes. Within a draft chapter I wrote: “[t]o reduce the slipperiness of the term ‘commons’, we will avoid strictly ‘cultural’ commons, such as ‘digital’ commons, but instead venture through articulations of the commons that have directly informed political shifts in conceptualising socionatural relationships within landscapes.” Despite queer ecology’s acknowledgement of the falsity of the nature/culture divide, the idea of engaging with digital commons remotely was just too ‘cultural’ and ‘remote’ for me. Instead, I wanted to experience participating with the human and more-than-human agents of the Radical Faerie landscapes—to observe and engage in the commoning of the landscapes and to see what technologies and ethics of inclusion and exclusion were at play. I was eager to experience the “embodied thrill” (Brown 2007, 2686) of participating within the raw material becoming of the landscape—I wanted to ground myself and my research, as Anne Galloway writes, “in the everyday lives of people, plants, and lands” (2016, 474).

When the lockdowns commenced in the UK and France in the spring of 2020, it was clear that I could not visit these Radical Faerie landscapes. However, neither could most Radical Faeries. Although there were a few stewards still living at the permanent French sanctuary, there were no gatherings, and visits were

not allowed. In the UK, all in-person activities stopped, and the gatherings in Northumberland and Glastonbury were cancelled. In their place, Radical Faeries began hosting multiple online gatherings and events each week to maintain community whilst people isolated at home. For me, equally stuck at home, I imagined that these digital spaces could become my new field, and I began to participate in some online activities. I supposed that I could use digital ethnography to research how commoning was transformed digitally through these online gatherings. This new direction would involve engaging with a history of queer digital ethnographies that have traced queer relationship-building, as Gieseeking summarises, across the “material, physical, discursive, imagined, virtual, and metaphorical spaces” that are utilised for the purpose of survival (2020, 948). And yet, I began to question the extent to which the digital sphere would be able to satisfy my original research questions. How would digital commoning allow me to engage with the processes that common situated socio-natural landscapes?

There are undoubtedly some exciting emerging directions for queer and more-than-human digital theories and methods (Galloway 2016; Lugosi and Quinton 2018); however, I remained sceptical of the potential for digital ethnographic methods to engage with more-than-human commoning practices within landscapes, particularly when these methods, as Galloway (2016) notes, are still very human-centred (475). Whilst many of the free, co-created online spaces launched by the Radical Faerie community enabled individuals to retain a sense of community-belonging and connected people who felt isolated and under considerable stress at the height of the national lockdowns—these spaces were nevertheless divorced from the quotidian practices of more-than-human commoning within the landscapes that I had been excited to encounter. Equally, digital commoning remains highly contentious amongst commons scholars as a result of the proximity that digital methods hold with predominantly capitalist digital technologies (Ossewaarde and Reijers 2017). Within the Radical Faerie context, for example, many of these online community spaces were hosted by for-profit video conferencing services, and generous members would cover the associated monthly fees.

Despite these anthropocentric and anti-capitalist frictions, I nevertheless had to find an opportunity to use digital methods “in a framework of political action that itself surpasses the notion of digital commoning” (Reijers and Ossewaarde 2018, 824). The focus of my digital ethnography, I hoped, could express some broader attention to commons landscapes as the socio-ecological relations “from which we seek emancipation” (Alarcón 2016, 57). As commons activists continue to claim, “everything is about land” (Jameson 2015, 131 — quoted in Alarcón 2016, 65), and whilst *in situ* ethnographic fieldwork of specific commons landscapes was not possible for myself as a result of the ongoing pandemic, digital methods felt like the only option of researching from a place of possibility.

## Action research and becoming a commoner

When trying to theoretically reconcile my methodological transformation towards digital methods, I was relieved to discover Anne Harris and Stacy Holman Jones' reflections on queer digital ecologies. Harris and Holman Jones contend that digital technologies help to further 'queer' the idea of ecologies and present new modes of human/non-human interaction beyond essentialist labels and towards degrees of material relationality (2019, 89). Through acknowledging the queer materiality of digital relations (the digital is inherently material despite dualistic virtual/reality narratives that occlude this), Harris and Holman contend that digital methods can be utilised to stretch through and shape multiple human/more-than-human ecologies beyond dualisms of mind/matter and in this case, remote/*in situ*. Through my computer and my smartphone, sat at home at my kitchen table, I became aware of the substantial material relationality that I held to aspects of the queer commons landscapes that I had wished to investigate. Following Mary Hufford's earlier suggestion that methods must bridge the existing dualisms that occlude visions of commons and commoning, no longer was I considering my new 'remote' positioning as the opposite to '*in situ*', but rather within a continuum of material relationality that stretched between my home and commons landscapes that I wanted to encounter. To reconcile the theoretical underpinnings of this project, I had to untangle and reconsider those *relata* that connected me with the materiality of these commons landscapes — the shared friendships, memories, knowledges, experiences and common aspirations. I had to situate myself, as with those Radical Faeries still working to maintain their commons landscapes digitally from their homes, phenomenologically *within* these spheres of relationality and translate digital commoning from a site of refuge into a relational method of inclusion within landscapes.

However, as I recognised my material entanglement within these commons landscapes through my growing relations with the communities who stewarded them, I was simultaneously confronted by the political and ethical implications of ethnographic research at a time of significant community precarity. At a time of prolific enclosure, using ethnography to research an intimately relational process like commoning quickly began to feel exploitative and unethical. Mirroring my own concerns, Ebru Yetiskin (2020) has argued that the increased enclosure of commons and commoning by both state and capital in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic entails a correspondingly political demand on the researcher to engage in positioning and practice that actively subverts enclosure—a '*paratactic* commoning'.

Yetiskin's call is heavily indebted to the 'agential realist' research positioning developed by theoretical quantum physicist and new materialist feminist theorist Karen Barad (2007). Within an agential realist approach, Barad argues that epistemology and ontology cannot be thought of as separate branches of philosophy. Using developments in experimental quantum physics, Barad argues that the means through which agents aim to know one another

experimentally affects the ways in which these agents behave. Barad contends that it is therefore important for researchers choosing epistemological approaches to acknowledge that they are also heavily ethically entangled with their results. Researchers should think of themselves not as “self-contained and rational subjects” who are able to negotiate their mediating role through an act of ‘self-reflexivity,’ but rather as acting upon and within the inter- and intra-actions of a larger material configuring (Barad, 2007, 91). Research outputs from agential realist positions consequently recognise the *relata* that operate between and within their research processes.

In light of Barad’s agential realist positioning and Yetiskin’s call for paratactic commoning, I further considered the ethical dimensions of my research design and questioned whether the onto-epistemological assumptions of traditional ethnography effectively destabilised power-laden researcher/participant dualisms within commons research at a time of global crisis, but equally, what broader implications this epistemological positioning would have on the world’s becoming. My proposed ethnography felt insufficient as an act of queer and ecological mutualism, and I arrived at what has been described as an ‘ethnographic limit’—a moment that marks a refusal within ethnographic research, where the answers to questions including ‘where will this get us?’ are not satisfactorily justified (Simpson 2007). In the wake of my ethnographic refusal, I was determined that my methods would paratactically common landscapes along with researcher/participant and *in situ*/remote dualisms. I wanted to make commoning an ethical priority and, as with Hufford, for commoning to no longer simply be my object of study, but my methodology (2016, 642). In order to become a commoner through my research practice, I turned to scholars who have used action research—a research paradigm that situates collaborative change-making at the heart of the research process—as a means of commoning research and researching commoning (Hansen et al. 2016).

In December 2020, reflecting upon anthropologist Audra Simpson’s ethical provocation to allow the goals of participants to direct the methods used within research (2007, 68), I spoke with some Radical Faeries to ask for their help in finding a direction through which I could channel my aspirations to common landscapes through action research methods. I was told about some Radical Faeries who were in the process of setting up a charity to “provide funds, resources, training, and advice to support LGBTQ+ community projects that are committed to sustainability” (EcoQueer Foundation n.d.). Sensing the overlapping values of this organisation with queer ecology and commoning, they suggested that this group would likely welcome my support with the charity’s registration with the UK Charities Commission. This group of Radical Faeries were also looking for some land that could be purchased through the charity and used as a space for LGBTQ+ inclusive recreation, health workshops and environmental education. Furthermore, the group had been concerned for some years about the need to record the experiences of queer/feminist/trans communities who have ventured to create new ways of living. They suggested my efforts

could be put to use by: 1) supporting the charitable registration process by helping the group to concretise their charitable objects; and 2) collating a DIY community archive of eco/feminist/queer communities who have built inclusive commons landscapes within the UK, which might in turn inspire and educate future queer commoners to build inclusive, sustainable landscapes.

The legal registration of this charity has prompted further exploration of the ‘substantive’ composition of landscapes within my project. Returning to my initial interpretation of landscapes as socionatural assemblages, the substantive aspects of landscape formation have become progressively more central within this emerging community archive. In addition to documenting memories and experiences of the *relata* that support quotidian practices of commoning within specific Radical Faerie landscapes—the resource management, conservation and spiritual rituals situated within the landscapes—this community archive also emphasises the institutional organisation of commons landscapes, particularly in relation to their legal/customary boundaries. In the face of accelerating enclosure, recording the historical legitimacy of queer commons landscapes has been prioritised within data-collection by both myself and participants. Through digitally documenting the means through which these commons landscapes have been governed, this community archive seeks to reclaim the legitimacy of queer commons landscapes as a viable means of sustainable and inclusive land stewardship.

### **Scavenging for commons**

Two years on from my ethnographic refusal, and I am continuing to gather information for this community archive from my Edinburgh flat. I am now in contact with five queer communities who are committed to inclusive and sustainable commoning of landscapes: the before-mentioned charity, an online reading group focused on eco/queer community-building, an LGBT+-led urban food-growing group, a queer arts project and an eco-friendly queer housing cooperative. Three of these groups have been recruited through snowball sampling via recommendations from the EcoQueer Foundation, and two were purposively sampled through searching online for UK-based groups that identified as queer or LGBT+ and eco-friendly and were engaged in commoning.

To research their commoning practices, I have been adopting research methods that engage with each group on their own terms and which will be beneficial for the communities and their landscapes in the future. My methodological flexibility is very similar to the queer “scavenger” methodology that Jack Halberstam adopted in his 1998 study of female masculinity (2018). Such a methodology combines different disciplinary methods that may appear at odds with one another but are used with the aim of producing information on diverse subjects who have been excluded from existing studies (Halberstam 2018, 12–13). Examples within this project include using PhotoVoice to document and reflect upon commoning and enrich communities’ own records, undertaking

remote qualitative interviews and oral history interviews which can later be used for their own purposes (including for internal strategy), and using autoethnographic methods whilst providing services such as assisting communities with fundraising or conservation activities. Each community is unique and demands a messy combination of approaches that paratactically reinforce their commons to avoid enclosure. There is not enough space here to flesh out the relationship between the choice of methods and each case-study community, and this research is currently evolving; however, I wish to draw attention to three methods that are currently at the forefront of this remote action research project and how they can support in commoning landscapes: oral histories, digital community archiving and autoethnography.

Oral histories have been used extensively within queer studies and also as a means of mapping how landscapes have been shaped and transformed through time within previous environmental research (Reeves, Sanders and Chisholm 2007). Like action research methods, oral histories have been positioned as democratising landscape research and interpretation (Arce–Nazario 2007). Of particular significance to this project, oral histories have been utilised as resilient methods for informing sustainable common resource management (Perkins 2019). As part of this action research project, oral history interviews will be undertaken amongst participants within queer commoning groups to highlight memories and experiences of how their commons functioned? How were they inclusive and/or sustainable? What were some of the challenges they encountered? How were socionatural boundaries made within the landscapes? How did these change over time? What lessons would they like to share with future commoners? These lessons and experiences will be shared within the community archive to provide future commoners with a toolkit of commoning methods.

Community archives have been positioned as a means of establishing ‘knowledge commons’ (Waters 2006), whilst also aiding community mobilisation (Allard and Ferris 2015) and empowering identities through accessing otherwise forgotten or excluded community histories (Giroux 2004, Crooke 2007). Digital community archives are perhaps most useful at reconciling the uneven power dynamics created by copyright and access to research data. I was particularly struck by Niamh Moore’s motivations to digitally archive the oral history interviews of eco/feminist activists in order to “do justice” to the stories that had been shared “as a collective activity” (2014, 87). Moore’s drive to archive accords well with Egmore’s suggestion that action research methods for commoning demand that a researcher proclaim that “we don’t own” the research (2016, 260). Whilst an ethnographic account of commoning landscapes may overlap with collaboration and action, the resulting data nevertheless would be governed by a single researcher and interpreted at the discretion of the researcher. In the interests of more effectively destabilising the power-laden practices involved in representing a community and opening any representations to critique, evolution and rearticulation, I hope that this community-based digital archive will become a resource for queering any ‘authentic’ accounts of commoning landscapes (including my own).

As a newly 'out' commoner, I have also redirected this research towards myself. I have been drawn to autoethnographic methods to document my own quotidian efforts to common for inclusive and sustainable landscapes. As with ethnographic fieldwork, autoethnographic methods focus on everyday life and how personal experiences are infused with meaning. Instead of seeking to write and represent the culture of queer commoning communities, I wish to place my own hybrid journey as a queer commoner in the context of this action research. I suggest the vulnerability and mutualism (Ellis 1999) implicit within this autoethnography as falling within action research methods for commoning. I intend for my autoethnographic account to be shared alongside the interviews, photos, oral history interviews and other data gathered within the community archive. Whilst my own autoethnography may not be geographically recognisable within any particular queer commons landscape, it nevertheless is presented as one of a series of stories to encourage other commoners to learn from the struggles and successes of forging frameworks of commoning landscapes from home — aspects of which some people may wish to replicate or further within their own commoning efforts.

These scavenged methods document and share some of the quotidian experiences of queer commons landscapes, including intersections with the more-than-human. However, it is true that there may be greater relational distance within some patterns of more-than-human commoning encountered through these methods than may have been experienced through long-term ethnographic fieldwork within the landscapes. For example, there is a different type of relationality fostered when reading an archived interview transcript which, for example, recounts the discussion of one year's mushroom growing amongst the urban LGBT+-led food-growing community than there is in the affective, multi-sensory materiality of harvesting the wood, inserting and sealing the mycelial plugs, maturing alongside the wood in the same environment, collectively forgetting about them, and then eating the few mushrooms together as a community. There will be times like these where my new methods will reduce the ability to engage with many of the imponderable *relata* that bring forth much of the affective queer materiality of a specific landscape. And yet, as I have discussed, many of these communities also haven't been able to experience these encounters due to the pandemic.

Within a shifting socionatural context of commoning brought on by the pandemic, queer ecology can transform understandings and approaches to commoning landscapes by acknowledging that landscapes and commoning practices are shaped by the relationality of agents geographically 'present' within a landscape as well as those not—both may have varying degrees of material relationality with the landscape, but it is a fallacy to suggest that landscapes are only shaped by those agents who are 'present.' One person who has stumbled upon the archive whilst cruising the web from their kitchen and reads the experiences of one group's mushroom-growing endeavours as a queer community-building exercise may be relationally affected enough to repeat this with another community, within another landscape, without ever

having met the interviewee, the mycelia or having physically been in this landscape, and yet there is a materially relational continuity between these events, between these geographically distant landscapes.

## Conclusion

Although the coronavirus pandemic has limited degrees of material relationality with more-than-human agents within Radical Faerie landscapes, I have taken comfort from feminist, queer and commons theorists who have encouraged researchers to situate knowledge-making in the relational contexts in which they find themselves. I am reminded by Cristián Alarcón's caveat when writing about the future emergence of commons that thinking about emancipation "can only be thought about in relation to a specific historical time" (2016, 54-55). In the wake of further enclosure brought on by the global pandemic and the limited ability to relate with landscapes through conventional methods, these times demand situated strategies and tactical reconceptualisations of relational frameworks for action research for commons, sustainability and democratisation.

When Mary Hufford suggested that commons research requires a commitment to the experience of "world-making from within" (641), I assumed at the beginning of this project that this equated to a situated geographical presence within a landscape. However, in light of Harris and Holman Jones' anti-dualistic reflections on queer digital ecologies alongside Karen Barad's agential realist positioning, I have further questioned the remote/*in situ* and researcher/participant binaries that I perpetuated when conceptualising ethnographic fieldwork within landscapes.

I believe that this research project now further resides within the theoretical tenets of commoning landscapes as a result of its ability to challenge the existing binaries that hinder opportunities to common. Equally, I now prioritise the ethical consequences of my own participation within onto-epistemological world-making, and I have reconfigured my positioning and my methods in service of paratactically commoning landscapes. These methods resonate with my central aim for this project, to identify commoning practices that are utilised by queer communities in order to aid the development of a more inclusive praxis for the sustainable restructuring of landscapes. They take different approaches to studying commoning, but they nevertheless continue to centralise the core tenets of commoning within their approaches: mutualism, reciprocity and redistribution. Through utilising a community archive in particular, this project broadens access to knowledge-making to politically inspire and further queer interpretations of commoning landscapes (including my own). These new methods have the potential to stretch material relationality further than traditional ethnography in challenging and redistributing power within the research process amongst my fellow participants.

I recommend that researchers questioning methodological feasibility in times of crisis question the broader implications of their research. Instead of simply turning to practicalities, as I did, I suggest that these junctions are important moments to return to researcher ethics for guidance. As has happened in my case, the transformation of methodologies can follow a more profound ‘onto–ethico–epistemological’ shift within researcher positioning. As Jung et al. summarise when discussing research methods in the time of COVID–19, whilst the pandemic forces new trajectories in theory and methods, “it is not only about what you do but who you become in this process” (2021, 172), and I would add, how this shapes the world in its becoming.

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