RESILIENCE IN CONTEMPORARY HAMILTON-BASED LITERATURE

STEEL CITY MAKEOVER:

EXAMINING REPRESENTATIONS OF RESILIENCE IN
CONTEMPORARY HAMILTON-BASED LITERATURE

By RACHEL HARVEY, B.A. (Honours)

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ABSTRACT:

Situating Hamilton, Ontario within the global context of economic restructuring incited by capitalist, neoliberal ideologies, I argue that Hamilton, a "city on the verge of renaissance" (Hume A6), needs to be guided by a more inclusive, citizen-led approach to "rebuilding" the city. To critically understand the complex power imbalances underlying this dominant culture of "rebuild," I will examine the multifaceted concept of resilience, seeing it as both a tool of domination used by those in power over the public sphere, as well as a personal and communal process that can encompass positive adaptation and growth in the face of change. A key question to be asked throughout is: "Resilience for what and for whom?" (Cote and Nightingale 475). While each chapter will be foregrounded with pertinent theory, I will look to various forms of literature based in Hamilton in order to seek nuanced and imaginative understandings of the current climate of "resilience" that are specific to this place.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to my Supervisor, Lorraine York, for her insight and support, and to my readers, Daniel Coleman and Susie O'Brien, for their comments and suggestions.

For my family and friends in The Hammer

(With special thanks to my ever-patient daughter Grace xo)

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List of Abbreviations

QEW: Queen Elizabeth Way

WASP: White Anglo-Saxon Protestant

Declaration of Academic Achievement

This thesis is the product of my own research, which I conducted with input and

resource recommendations from my supervisory committee (Lorraine York,

Daniel Coleman, and Susie O'Brien).

Preface

This project is the result of a personal desire to find something to love about the city I was raised in.

Growing up in Hamilton region, I often felt that this place was somewhere you should work to get out of—a place that you only stayed in as long as you had to. But life circumstances kept me connected to this place.

Is there a way to love a city you grew up disliking? (Hate is too strong a word; it is more of a steady dislike). Over the past few years I've wondered whether my impression of Hamilton needed revising. After all, the city has changed in remarkable ways since I was a child, and I have to admit that it was never all bad.

I spent more time in the downtown core areas, everywhere from King William and James Streets to Queen Street and Westdale to McMaster. I visited my friend on Carrick in the East End and strolled through Gage Park. I bonded with horses at a barn on Nebo Road near Stoney Creek. I rode my bike on the waterfront trails at the Bay Area. I went hiking through the forests of the Dundas Conservation Area. And I realized that this geography was kind of great.

Culturally speaking, I'd always wanted to be a writer, so I did a project for my undergraduate degree last year on Hamilton writers. Through this, I met many creative people doing what I want to do, and heard some great stories about this place I was growing to like. What really captured my interest were the stories of people who have lived here even longer than I have. Sure, some of them disliked Hamilton—it's a tough city (as exemplified by the annual literary festival's title Grit Lit). But a lot of the writers also exhibited a sense of resilience, of strength and perseverance in the face of adversity that really struck a chord with me.

And so, in this project I set out to explore the notion of resilience in contemporary Hamilton-based literature. One thing that quickly became apparent was the feeling of nervousness surrounding how the city was rebuilding itself in the contemporary moment. After the restructuring of the steel mills and a subsequent lag in city developments, we are now seeing a rapidly changing city landscape and culture. How could I capture writer's experiences of this "resilient" contemporary moment?

The sections that follow focus on what I think are pertinent issues surrounding notions of "rebuilding" happening in Hamilton right now. In each chapter, I provide a theoretical context for the topic under discussion, and then analyze

selected Hamilton-based literatures in order to gather a nuanced understanding of place that addresses the multifaceted nature of resilience and asks us to think about our personal and collective investments in place. If the people who live in a place do nothing to change it, they will have to live with the changes made by others.

While my dislike of Hamilton has not completely abated since doing this project, I am glad to admit that for better or for worse, Hamilton is my home.

Introduction: Locating Resilience in Contemporary "Rebuild" Projects

"Resilience for what and for whom?"

~Cote and Nightingale
"Resilience Thinking Meets Social Theory"

Right now in this contemporary moment, there are large-scale changes occurring in post-industrial urban spaces worldwide. As many advanced capitalist economies (particularly Western) have shifted from being manufacturing-based to service-based, so too have the cultures, politics, geographies and ecologies of cities and towns that once boomed in their industrial heydays changed to reflect this shift. Old banks and abandoned hotels which were forty years ago the gems of a downtown's geography are suddenly receiving facelifts in order to accommodate office spaces and condominiums. Old is being replaced with new (or so the dichotomy goes), or at least old is undergoing a type of reconstructive surgery to appear better and "fixed." Downtown cores are being "cleaned up"— with lower-class people, including laid off factory workers, being pushed out through the process of gentrification—and middle-class people are moving into once old industrial towns to enjoy city spaces that are now on the verge of what popular media likes to call a "rebirth." More often than not, these city makeovers are aligned with the virtues of common sense, framed as projects that display resilience in the face of adversity and are necessary and wanted by all citizens: This must be done in order to save our "post"-industrial city from extinction!

While city makeovers are pleasant to look at, and are arguably much needed in towns that have fallen to the wayside since their industrial centers have

been scaled back or shut down in favour of off-shore manufacturing, the already-existing social and cultural communities of "post"-industrial towns risk getting bulldozed over in the process. Fixing up old buildings is not necessarily an action that results in oppressive consequences, but problems arise when projects of urban development are informed by the pervading dominant ideologies of our times: namely, globalization and capitalism. While I do not aim to give an extensive analysis of these ideologies, it is useful to provide some background as to how I understand them in order to critically discuss the concept of resilience and its uses in neoliberal projects of urban development. Eric Cazdyn and Imre Szeman provide a helpful perspective in their book *After Globalization* which I will draw on. A common understanding of globalization, a discourse that was up until recently used often unquestioningly to explain the world to us today, is that it is simply an "interlocking of national economies with one another through trade and finance" (Cazdyn and Szeman 10). For Cazdyn and Szeman, however, globalization is more of an ideological project that presents itself as an "objective historical process" in order to solidify itself as something that no one can do anything about (10). Popular logic follows that the world is shrinking thanks to transnational trade and technological advancements, and there is nothing we can do about it but hold on tight and ride the globalization wave. We are all cosmopolitans now (either that, or naïve lovers of the local). But as optimistic as it was to believe in the existence of a utopian, borderless realm where the concept of nationhood only provided an arbitrary link between person, place, and

belonging, we know that nationhood is still a very real construction that has very real consequences. What "globalization" did was mask or hide the power relations that were operating underneath it.

Not surprisingly, central to the establishment of the lie of globalization was the superpower United States, who used it as a tool in the 1990s-early 2000s to spread ideals of liberal democracy and to sustain a position of global hegemony via economic, political, and cultural means (11). However, with the financial crisis of 2008 (remember the Occupy backlash?), it soon became apparent to scholars and civic members alike that globalization was a concept designed to hide the workings of capitalism. For example, the "global village" notion of globalization on one hand seemed to promote a coming together of people, yet on the other hand, it also ensured that capitalist economics would pervade global economies and the striving for profits, gains, mergers, and acquisitions would become a worldwide driving force for measures of progress and success. It seems hopeless to conceptualize or imagine a time and space outside of this all-encompassing process; it has become so ingrained in our understanding of "how the world works" that our conceptual scope is inherently narrowed and becomes dependent on this system.

It is important to consider how these pervasive ideologies affect projects of urban development, because they most certainly play an important role in informing them. Downtown "rebuild" efforts often follow a logic that is in tune with capitalistic motivations, under the common sense assumption that what is

good for those in power is good for all. Public opinion is often ignored or at the very least not consulted, as many rebuilding decisions are made by city and government officials and private developers. What results is a loss of public space, of places where democratic and diverse interactions can occur, and the creation of a sterilized landscape that works to erase the communities and cultures that have been part of city areas for decades.

While I do not intend to focus solely on these pitfalls of urban development, they will be highlighted throughout my analysis of resilience as present in contemporary writings about projects of this scope. My idea to analyze development projects through representations of resilience came after noticing that many Western "post"-industrial rebuild efforts use "resilience" and its sister terms (e.g., revitalize, rejuvenate, rebuild, renew) to denote a common sense, positive, forward-moving development process. Interestingly, competing stakeholders such as public activists tended to use similar resilience language (albeit in differing contexts) to denote progress. Therefore, it is important to explore the tensions surrounding the use of this concept in development discussions, in order to begin re-imagining rebuilding efforts that foster more inclusive decisions about who gets to use what space and for what purposes. As Cazdyn and Szeman assert, the present is a curious time when the veil of globalization has been dropped and the failures (and successes) of capitalism are exposed for everyone to see (20). We must ask how we can envision a "new" city that is not solely determined by capitalist values. In the following chapters, I

suggest that perhaps what we need are more nuanced, imaginative approaches to understanding these issues.

Hamilton as Case Study

Before I get into the methodology that I will use for my discussion of resilience, I want to first provide a focus for my discussion of contemporary projects of urban development. Rather than taking a generalized look at cities worldwide, I will specifically analyze the current rebuilding climate in the "post"-industrial city of Hamilton, Ontario, Canada. The reason for my focus on Hamilton is twofold: 1) the city is currently undergoing an undeniable process of change that spans across economic, social, cultural, geographical, and environmental sectors; and 2) I have a personal investment in this location because I was born and raised in Hamilton and the surrounding area.

To an outsider, the city of Hamilton is often referred to by such less-than-flattering nicknames as "The Armpit of Ontario," "Steel City," and "Hammertown" (although this is changing, with overly optimistic slogans such as "Art is the New Steel"). The reason for this, I think, is that most people gather their opinions driving past the smoke stacks and industrial belt along the QEW and the Skyway Bridge on their way to or from Toronto and Niagara. Although, even residents of Hamilton have been known to use these nicknames (myself included), exhibiting an ambivalent "dislike" for the city by toying with these identity politics in an effort to reappropriate them—we are proud of the legacy of our working-class city and all of the grittiness (figurative and literal) that comes

with it. We are also acutely aware of the multi-faceted and diverse make-up of

Hamilton's population, economy, geography, and culture, so we understand the

"Steel City" image as one among many representations of the city. Hamilton has,

after all, recently been dubbed "The City of Waterfalls."

Over the past 30 years or so, Hamilton has entered a state of "urban renewal

or rebuild." This notion of urban renewal, as I have mentioned, is not an isolated

phenomena specific to Hamilton; it is a global occurrence, and often Hamilton is

compared to sibling "post"-industrial cities that have been "made over." For

example, in 2010, delegates from Hamilton along with then mayor Fred

Eisenberger travelled to Pittsburgh in the United States in order to gather ideas

from the now-booming city in Pennsylvania that could be applied to Hamilton.

(There is a three-part series published by CBC Hamilton called "Steel to Steel"

that outlines how Pittsburgh can be a "model of economic redevelopment" for

Hamilton [Craggs 1]). Hamilton was also recently compared to the city of Bilboa,

Spain, a city in Europe which was an industrial hub in the 19th and 20th centuries

and now has a service-based economy, famous as the home of the Guggenheim

Museum. Writer and architecture critic Christopher Hume writes that Hamilton,

like the "revitalized" Bilboa, is a city "on the brink of a renaissance" (A6).

Clearly, there are many global models and suggestions for how Hamilton should

and could enact resilience.

It is my goal to tease out some of the major theoretical conundrums that I

see as being part of projects of this scope. Also, I am particularly interested in the

fact that many local people have written about this changing Hamilton, yet there is little scholarly attention given to these writers' works. Therefore, after foregrounding relevant theories in each chapter, I will juxtapose these issues with what local Hamilton-based literature says about resilience and "rebuilding," in order to come up with some conclusions (and more questions) to be considered when framing "resilience" in Hamilton and "post"-industrial cities in general.

Looking Through the Lens of Literature

Understandably, there are many methodologies that I could select to carry out a project of this nature—I could conduct interviews, create a documentary, apply different urban development theories to Hamilton, and so on. However, what interests me most are the nuanced ways that literature can provide insight into the diversities *and* similarities of people's opinions and experiences of place. By analyzing literary representations of the changing city, it is my hope that we can gather an understanding of the ways that people are feeling and responding to this project of urban renewal. What are their personal experiences and investments in Hamilton? How do these play into the ways that they think about a changing Hamilton? What do the subtleties behind what they are writing communicate to readers? This is an emotional project and subject-matter, particularly for residents of Hamilton, and it is just as important to analyze the thoughts of the characters and voices writers use in their literature as it is to analyze data gathered by surveyors to measure the social and cultural effects of a "renaissance" city. By using the term literature, I am creating a loose category that

encompasses a range of genres, from poems to newspaper articles, to graphic novels and 'zines, to creative non-fiction and posters. The main reason for including such a range of works is that I hope to juxtapose the obvious, in-your-face rhetoric of newspaper columnists and politicians surrounding rebuild issues with the subtle (and sometimes not-so-subtle) moments in poems, non-fiction, 'zines and posters that speak to and grapple with a changing city. There are understandably numerous tensions and competing interests in projects of urban development, so the key questions to be asked are: Whose voices tend to be listened to? Whose voices are being drowned out, and why? What can we learn from a comparison of viewpoints?

As Rita Felski says in her book *Uses of Literature*, literature does not merely provide a plethora of differing ideas and perspectives, but in fact there are just as likely "elements of familiarity, generic commonality, even predictability that shape, however subtly, all literary texts" (4). Furthermore, although literary theorists tend to favour seeing literature either as a window to Otherness (as in a process of self-identification with an Other), or as a product of the ideologies of their time, it is also important to recognize that, as Felski articulates, "the transactions between texts and their readers are varied, contingent, and often unpredictable" (6). In other words, at the same time that I will be relating to the Other as a reader, or analyzing a text's social/ ideological leanings, I also need to be aware of how my own interests come into play in my interpretations of the literature. After all, I do believe that our vision of history is propelled by our

needs and desires in the present; therefore, what does the literature say about this, through varying voices—including my own? I will begin some chapters with personal anecdotes that hopefully will provide insight into my own experiences of Hamilton.

Another reason that a critical reading of literature is unlike other potential forms of research that I could undertake is the notion of immersion or enchantment. Calling for a way of reading and critiquing literature that does not rely so heavily on a hermeneutics of suspicion, the likes of which postmodernist and poststructuralist thinkers tend to favour, Felski endorses an appreciation of enchantment for readers of literature, saying, "Even as we are bewitched, possessed, emotionally overwhelmed, we know ourselves to be immersed in an imaginary spectacle: we experience art in a state of double consciousness" (74). In other words, we are not entirely in danger of abandoning critical thought when we immerse ourselves in a work of fiction or literary merit, but rather, we can glean new things by acknowledging this mode of thought as it occurs. Jane Bennett furthers this idea by seeking to advance the "affective force" of moments of wonder in the reading process as a source of energy that might "propel ethical generosity" (3). Bennett sees the disenchanted state of modernity as something that "ignores and discourages affective attachment to the world," and therefore literature's ability to enchant readers is not an obstacle to critical thought, but rather it is a catalyst or a motivation for an ethical dialectic on the subject matter.

A final reason I have chosen to look to literature for how projects of rebuilding are perceived and presented is that literature is a keeper of knowledge about the way things are in the world. Felski says that this form of knowledge refers to "what literature discloses about the world beyond the self, to what it reveals about people and things, mores and manners, symbolic meanings and social stratification" (83), and I agree. Literature can tell us much about what I have already termed the subtle, shown rather than spoken presences of resilience in the city rebuild debate. To underestimate the effective power of literature would be to ignore the real impact it has not only on our understanding of self and others, but also on the ways it can offer a glimpse into the psyche.

Just What is Resilience, Anyway?

At first, resilience seems like a straightforward concept. To offer a basic definition, the Oxford English Dictionary (OED) defines it as, "The capacity to recover quickly from difficulties; toughness" (Holden & Rubery). Indeed, this notion of strength in the face of adversity is a common understanding of resilience in contemporary culture. However, if we look closer at the concept of resilience, we will discover that it is fraught with multiple meanings. In what follows, I will trace an outline of discussions of resilience as it is understood in different disciplinary contexts including psychology, ecology, socio-ecological systems, human geography, and urban development in order to emphasize the necessity of taking a multidisciplinary approach to resilience discussions.

One of the most common contemporary understandings of resilience aligns

with a psychological understanding of the concept: the ability of a person to

mentally bounce back from adversity, to adapt to change and to grow in the

process. Michael Ungar, a Social Work professor and the Principal Investigator at

the Resilience Research Centre at Dalhousie University, has done extensive work

trying to understand psychological resilience in adolescents in order to

incorporate that understanding into disciplinary clinical practices. In his research,

Ungar rejects the somewhat popular opinion in the 80s and early 90s that

resilience is an individual trait (either inherent or acquired), and instead ascribes a

Foucaultian understanding of a youth's capacity for resilience, seeing their

resilience as influenced by the "economically, racially, socially, geographically,

and even physically constrained choices available" (ix). In other words, he

understands resilience as something that is socially constructed. Fascinatingly,

Ungar found that many youth who have been deemed deviant actually believe

themselves to be resilient, leading him to question institutionalized

understandings of resilient behaviour and thought (5). What if resilient behaviour

was outside of the boundaries of the DSMV[1], for instance? The standard clinical

definition of resilience in fields such as Social Work and Psychology outlines it as

a "class of phenomena characterized by good outcomes in spite of serious threats

to adaptation or development" (Masten qtd in Ungar 5). The problem with this

definition, says Ungar, is that it takes for granted that we all abide by a universal

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[1] The Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders is a tool used by professionals in the
mental health field in order to diagnose mental disorders in clients.

understanding of concepts of "good" and "threats" (5). Ungar found that, "for many children, patterns of deviance are healthy adaptations that permit them to survive unhealthy circumstances" (6). Through his work on resilience, we can see that it is a complex concept that asks us to look at the environments around us as indicators of how resilience is shaped, and to think outside dominant social norms in order to understand adaptations to change.

Before resilience became a popular buzz word in psychology and social service fields, it had a history of usage in ecology. In the 1970s, biologist Crawford S. Holling took a previous scientific understanding of resilience, what he called "engineering resilience," which understood resilience in terms of "the time it takes a system to return to a stable maxim," and questioned the "given" in this situation, which is that resilience is an expected process (Walker and Cooper 146). He instead suggested that the process of resilience is not simply a breaking down and rebuilding, but that, in ecological terms, resilience is "the ability of an ecosystem to remain cohesive *while undergoing* extreme perturbations" (146 emphasis added). Resilience in this contemporary sense becomes a measure of systems to stay cohesive within a state of change. Holling posited that the concern of natural resource management should not be to return to some sort of "pristine" state of equilibrium (as if this is even possible), but rather, to focus on the resilience of "biotic communities exposed to severe economic pressures" (146). Holling wanted to develop an environmental management approach that would "sustain productivity even under conditions of extreme instability" (146). From

this perspective, resilience becomes unpredictable, and a system's ability to absorb that unpredictability is key; therefore, Holling advocates for an appreciation of flexibility in the midst of change. Through his work, the focus switched from "ecosystems conservation" to "ecosystems as a total complex system" (147). This led to a general systems theory capable of integrating society, economy, and the biosphere (147).

If, in fact, the process of resilience is a "continual adaptive cycle of growth, accumulation, restructuring, and renewal" (Holling qtd in Walker and Cooper 147), then perhaps Hamilton is not in a state of "rebuilding" but rather of "restructuring." The city has already been built; there are diverse cultures, people, places, buildings and biospheres that will most certainly resist the notion that Hamilton is a blank slate. Yet at the same time, we cannot expect to return to a "pristine" city, even if that is the sort of politics some advocates of protectionist policies may be seeking. Change is happening, whether we want it to or not. The key is how we choose to think about it and react from within it.

However useful Holling's biological model of resilience may be to my Hamilton case study, it is important to understand how his theory is reliant on capital. That is, the capital is the "inherent potential of a system that is available for change, since that potential determines the range of future options possible" (Walker and Cooper 147). Holling's focus on capital and the notion that socio-ecological resilience is flexible and unpredictable, ideologically aligns with his contemporary Friedrich Hayek's notion that the markets must be flexible, because

"no centralized authority could hope to predict, much less control, the precise evolution of individual elements in the [market] system" (149). Hayek critiqued the equilibrium model condoned by Keynesian policy, and advocated for a complex systems model that recognized that social, economic, and natural aspects cannot be regulated by a state, but rather, are inherently dependent on each other. The market then is endowed with "imminent law-making powers…to which he [Hayek] then subjects the state" (150). Hayek's vision is for a radical, neoliberal style reform that would "remake all social institutions in accordance with the self-organizing dynamic of the market" (150). In the wake of contemporary financial crises, risk managers are turning to Hayek's theory (and Holling's) of complex systems management in order to deal with system variance. This leads to the use of resilience today as "an operational strategy of emergency preparedness, crisis response, and national security" (152). Resilience is now one of those buzz words that is used to legitimate extra surveillance and state control, because the logic dictates that we are headed for future results that we cannot predict or prevent, but we can certainly plan for or adapt to them (144). As we have seen with the transmutability of Holling's biological understanding of resilience into Hayek's free market theorizing of resilience, this term means more than just bouncing back from adversity; it can also be, in the words of Walker and Cooper, "a pervasive idiom of global governance" (144). I will focus my critique of resilience throughout this thesis on these neoliberal uses of the term.

Cote and Nightingale discuss how the ecological understanding of

resilience has also stretched into a framework for understanding human-

environment dynamics (475). They define resilience as "the outcome of

interdisciplinary work [that] refers to the ability of socio-ecological systems to

absorb disturbance without flipping into another state or phase" (Gunderson 2000

qtd in Cote and Nightingale 475). The concept of social-ecological systems

developed in the 90s as experts in the social sciences, economics, and ecology

came together under the umbrella of the Resilience Alliance in order to make

connections between Holling's ecological resilience work and social science (476-

477). The problem with this collaborative effort, however, is the assumption that

ecological and social systems have similar dynamics which make the application

of resilience transferable from one to the other (475). Similar to what Ungar

struggles with in his social-psychological understanding of resilience, there are

epistemological and ontological tensions between a framework of resilience that

is centered on a systems approach and normative questions such as "resilience for

what and for whom?" (Cote and Nightingale 475). However, the major benefit of

resilience thinking, according to Cote and Nightingale, is that, rather than looking

at the human-environment scope as one that must be controlled or managed,

resilience advocates for flexibility and understanding the heterogeneity of the

relationship between human and environment (478). The term "social resilience"

came out of this human-environment understanding of resilience, defined as "the

ability of groups or communities to cope with external stresses and disturbances

as a result of social, political, and environmental change" (Adger qtd in Cote and Nightingale 478). However, the problem with this way of thought is that it treats processes of adaptation within a single epistemology of resilience which tends to hide power structures—whose interests are being served and why. Therefore, it is imperative that I take into account power relations and cultural values in any discussion of social resilience, and try not to view resilience as a blanket term, in order to consider which resilience outcomes seem to be desirable and how/ if they are privileged over others and why that might be the case.

Rather than take an institutionalized, rational, authoritative approach to resilience in my discussion of Hamilton as case study, I must focus on a "new analysis," understanding resilience as a concept that is laden with power imbalances and cultural nuances that need to be taken into account if it is to be any kind of critical framework. Because we tend to grant authority to scientific forms of knowledge, and resilience has its roots in the sciences and social sciences, it has an uncanny way of being resilient to critique and "under-theorized" (Walker and Cooper 143). Resilience is resilient or adaptable to a wide variety of disciplines, motivations, and political projects, and as such, it often goes unquestioned. While I do not claim to redefine resilience in my thesis, I will attempt through my analysis of contemporary Hamilton-based literature to be aware of and grapple with the problematic nature of the concept. It is my goal not only to consciously work with the complexities inherent in this "buzz word," but also to try to understand how these complexities relate to the restructuring project

happening in Hamilton. Because contemporary ideas of resilience tend to reject an "equilibrium" view (i.e., the notion that an ideal balance exists), it can serve to pinpoint some aspects of Hamilton's development that are not democratically or justly decided—as long as there is also an awareness of the potential for resilience to be a homogenizing notion in and of itself. A key question to ask throughout is: "Does the resilience of some livelihoods result in the vulnerability of others?" (Cote and Nightingale 482).

There are several other key sources on contemporary urban resilience that are critical of the Holling-Hayek understanding of the concept. The geographer Neil Agder understands resilience (and vulnerability) as a community's ability to withstand shocks to their social infrastructure, which he says can be observed "by examining positive and negative aspects of social exclusion, marginalization, and social capital" and the institutions that regulate this (352). The importance, to Agder, lies in an analysis of the underdog's reaction to adversity.

Another geographer, Thilo Lang, has done extensive work on regional and urban resilience in Europe, and understands not "the city," but "collective or individual actors" as the agents of change, and seeks to understand how the concept of resilience can "help researchers to study the response of local and regional actors to socio-economic challenges" (15). In other words, in order to escape the normative workings of urban governance, Lang advocates for analyses of urban governance to recognize that cities are made up of an "incoherent amalgam of different networks and forms of collaboration of public, semi-public,

and private actors, overlapping and diffusing at the same time" (20). He importantly concludes that spatial and social justices are particular aspects of urban and regional development that "deserve more attention," and I will focus on these issues throughout my discussion (22).

As an alternative development to the neoliberal notion of economic resilience, the political-economic geographer Ray Hudson outlines several options for regions to work *with* resilient capitalist and neoliberal models of regional development, by triggering national state interventions, some of which have been successful in the past (paraphrased in Lang 21). As part of these attempts at subversion from within the capitalist system, Hudson also questions power relations behind why and how crises are identified and how strategies for adaptation are developed (Hudson 2).

Finally, MacKinnon and Derickson's rhetorical and political critique of resilience defines the tension within the term nicely as it applies to urban and regional development: "The recent upsurge of interest in community resilience is not only a product of the 'top-down' strategies of government, but also of the 'bottom-up' activities of a wide variety of community groups and environmental campaigns" (5). According to them, it is counterproductive for 'bottom-up' groups to adopt a resilience framework, because it is steeped in the "hegemonic modes of thought that support global capitalism" (14). Either way ("top-down" or "bottom-up"), this "mobilizing discourse" fosters a false sense of resilience as a common project, even though there are in reality many competing interests (8).

Rather than use the concept of resilience (which they see as privileging existing and unjust social relations), MacKinnon and Derickson advocate for the use of another concept altogether: community resourcefulness. Resourcefulness advocates for a democratic community activism, whereby local autonomy (the always contested ability of those within the locality to control the institutions that define it) is the goal, and a sharing across regional and other spaces is encouraged (12). Using a framework of resourcefulness, the "conservatism of resilience policy and activism" is thwarted by foregrounding the needs, space, and time that civic engagement requires, thus lessening the dependence on a capitalist system (13). While MacKinnon and Derickson's critique of "resilience" is certainly valid (which is why I have mentioned it here), I do not wholeheartedly adopt the notion that resilience is simply a tool of hegemonic power in this thesis—after all, to entirely adhere to this perspective would be to nullify my framework of analysis. Rather, I think that resilience is a slippery concept, and it is this very slipperiness that allows for the conceptual borders between "neoliberal" and "community" to be challenged. Therefore, resilience is effective as a framework if approached from a multidisciplinary perspective to allow for the nuances of "real life," which is how I plan to approach it. Furthermore, in reality there are different resiliences (for example, bioregional and spiritual) that are not solely determined or defined by a neoliberal formulation of the term. For example, Maroussia Hajdukowski-Ahmed has written about three research projects that took place in Hamilton, which sought to help refugee women reconfigure their "in-between" identities

through creative expressions of their stories of struggle and survival (215). To Hajdukowski-Ahmed, these projects showed that "most of the factors that construct resilience are of a relational nature and emphasize the importance of dialogue, experience-sharing, community, and mutual support (219). By looking at literature written by local residents I believe we can also gain a glimpse of the possibilities that resilience presents, seeing it not just as a discourse that fosters the false sense of a common project, but as a discourse that opens up dialogue concerning the various ideas and interests underlying such a concept.

In each chapter that follows, I will first provide a theoretical context for the aspects of resilience under discussion, and then consider selected forms of literature based in Hamilton which speak to this discussion. Chapter 1 provides a historical context for the decline of the steel mill industry in Hamilton, and explores representations of a "post"-industrial city in the poems of James Deahl and Chris Pannell. Chapter 2 examines the tensions surrounding Hamilton's changing physicality by focusing on local heritage building debates; John Terpstra's creative non-fiction piece "Part One: Why Must We Die?" lends a unique perspective on the importance of buildings and place to people's psychological and spiritual needs. Chapter 3 addresses pertinent social justice issues surrounding the cultural and economic changes that a capitalist-driven resilience presents, featuring a critique of Richard Florida's "creative class" theory as it engages with the works of Tings Chak, Sarah Mann, and Simon Orpana. Chapter 4 discusses the advantages and disadvantages of thinking about

urban development projects from a regional approach, and highlights Sylvia Bowerbank and Marilyn Gear Pilling's works as presenting alternative spatial visions that encompass often disadvantaged voices in urban discourses.

Overall, I will focus on a critique of neoliberal forms of resilience, which I have outlined as ideologically founded on Holling and Hayek's theories, by adhering to a critical, multidisciplinary approach to resilience that pays close attention to the power relations informing uses of the word. It is my aim not only to show that resilience can be used as an effective framework for analyzing contemporary local literature, but also to contest the conceptual borders surrounding present-day uses of the word and to conceive of different ways (such as bioregional and spiritual) that this concept can be understood.

Chapter 1: Questioning the "Post" in Post-Industrial:
The Gritty City's History, Today

> "And the ghost flame soars, its light being
> absorbed now by the brightening day."
>
> ~James Deahl
> "Dofasco"

Crucial to a discussion about Hamilton and resilience is an examination of

the steel history of Hamilton which in large part informs its current culture of

"rebuild." To begin on a personal note, although I have lived in Hamilton for most

of my life, I have tended to stick to the areas of what we call the "mountain" (i.e.,

the upper part of the escarpment) and the West side of the city. To me, the steel

mills were part of the Northeast End, the place on my periphery where I hardly

went unless my friends wanted to go to the beach (although we never actually

swam in Lake Ontario; the mills had long since polluted the water to the point

where swimming in it would cause stomach pains). Although my mother grew up

in the North End of the city near Burlington Street (the original name of the street

was "Industrial Road") and I have memories of visiting my grandmother there, it

was always a place on the edge to me, an almost unfriendly place that threatened

to pop the suburban bubble I was so used to floating in.

Thankfully, I have since become aware of the important presence of the

steel mills in Hamilton, for better and for worse, and am critical about attempts to

"erase" that part of the city's history—like any project of erasure, this approach

ignores disadvantaged populations, social and cultural neighbourhood dynamics,

environmental affects, economic impacts, etc., that do not exist in isolation from

the rest of the city. What interests me now is precisely what I tended to ignore when I was younger: What about the steel mills? What was (and is) their significance in the city? Beyond my personal motivation, it is also important to get a grasp on Hamilton's steel history because a lot of the poetry, graphic novels, stories and news articles talk about this history without much context, and it always gets dragged into the "rebuild" discussions. What follows is a discussion of my research on Hamilton's steel industry, followed by an analysis of some poetry written by Hamiltonians that focuses on the city as a "post"-industrial town (and all of the tensions that come with this designation).

To effectively understand Hamilton's steel industry and its rise and subsequent fall in productivity and employment, it is important to situate it in the context of the restructuring that has occurred in the global economy. As outlined in my Introduction, with the help of the ideology of globalization (among other things), capitalism has become a world-wide force in both developed and developing economies. With a widespread emphasis on capital accumulation, crisis and renovation (which, as discussed previously is related to the Holling-Hayek formulation of understanding resilience as an unpredictable process whereby strategic planning must be done in order to prepare for the various unknowns), the capitalist system is not failing so much as it is changing.

Dennis Livingstone, a leading scholar on the steel industry who focuses on Hamilton as a case study to understand the changing trends in steel manufacturing, explains that the changes capitalist economies are going through

are nothing new. In fact, agricultural production followed a similar trend, as food

production remained the primary labour source until the rise of industrial

capitalism in the nineteenth century (Livingstone et al. 1). As industrial machinery

was developed, agricultural workers were "forced off the land [and] were drawn

into factories," and the production of agricultural goods as commodities soon

created a supply much larger than the demand (1). Subsequently, international

trade and price wars ensued, and agricultural workers in developed countries

became less and less a significant part of the makeup of the labour force; the

expansion of manufacturing continued into the twentieth century (1). According

to Livingstone, "Just as with the transformation of agricultural production, the

steel industry will likely become more and more capital intensive and less and less

a source of employment" (2).

Similarly, Wally Seccombe notes in the introduction to *Recasting Steel

Labour: The Stelco Story*, that

> The history of capitalism reveals a series of technological
> revolutions, industrial reorganizations, recompositions of the
> labour force, repeated shifts in the pecking order of leading nation-
> states, and frequent realignments of trade routes, investment flows,
> migratory pathways, and communications networks. And yet, in
> the midst of change, there is continuity (Corman et al. 2).

What Seccombe is apt to point out here is that none of these economic dynamics

that often get pinned to contemporary moments are new; in fact, "they are

extensions of centuries of economic development" (Corman et al. 2). The

difference in this moment is that the capitalist notion of progress, growth and

expansion has sped things up, to the point now where time and distance appear

shortened, and since markets for consumer goods and capital are not booming like

they did during the post-WWII era, competition between market rivals ensues and

multinational mergers (i.e., companies that can produce on a large-scale, quickly,

efficiently, and with minimal labour costs) are taking over. Locally owned

companies and smaller businesses tend to suffer under this regime, and most

smaller manufacturing plants become subsidiaries of major corporations, bent on

making products that follow "modular assembly nodes and labour teams" (i.e., the

same plants worldwide create the same products for the global market) (5). Many

scholars label this a transition from mass-production Fordism in the 1950s to post-

Fordist production forms (5).

Whatever the case, one point is clear: the term "post"-industrial is not

necessarily accurate for describing the steel industry in the present day. It implies

that manufacturing, and steel work in particular, has all but failed or disappeared

as an economic contributor, which is just not true. Although, as Livingstone

points out, "[B]etween 1970 and the early twenty-first century, the advanced

capitalist countries lost significant numbers of manufacturing jobs, over a third of

the total employment in this sector," this sector has not disappeared, but rather, its

structure has changed (Livingstone et al. 2). This change has seen manufacturing

industries working heavily with service industries, "both as providers and as users

of intermediate inputs," and, "[T]he interactive centrality of manufacturing also

means that the working conditions and wage levels of manufacturing workers

have strong effects on those of the burgeoning numbers of service workers" (2-3).

The manufacturing and service industries are intertwined and not mutually exclusive, like many politicians would have us believe.

While theorists such as Allen John Scott and most recently Richard Florida attempt to drive a stake into the heart of the manufacturing economy, favouring "new industrial spaces" and a so-called "creative class" as the driving forces of a "new" economy (more on this in Chapter 3), Livingstone and many others (myself included) take issue with this erasure of a manufacturing workforce. As Livingstone outlines, we cannot view the manufacturing industry as insignificant anymore, particularly because:

1) Manufacturing sustains agricultural output and nurtures high-level service activities;

2) Despite globalization, most innovative manufacturing remains in the industrial regions established early in the 20th century;

3) Even though ownership is shifting away from older industrial sites, access to consumer markets in developed manufacturing regions is likely to be maintained as long as profitability occurs; and,

4) The remaining manufacturing industries in developed countries are likely to be knowledge-based organizations. Steel is now a sophisticated commodity, and computerized production systems have been central to the steel industry long before the knowledge-based discourse showed up (Livingstone et al. 3).

Clearly, the manufacturing and service- or knowledge-based sectors have a

relationship of intermingling complexity. Any use of the term "post"-industrial

must denote this relationship of restructuring, and it is with this in mind that I use

the term.

Moving the focus to Hamilton, this city plays a key role in the ongoing

history of the steel industry in Canada. In the 1970s to early 1980s, Hamilton was

home to the largest steel company in Canada, Stelco (founded in 1910), and the

largest industrial worksite in the country, Hamilton Works (Livingstone et al. 9).

The city's ideal location had much to do with this—situated along Lake Ontario in

the center of Ontario's Golden Horseshoe, Hamilton boasted easy water and rail

transport, cheap hydro-electricity, local government land, capital grants and tax

incentives, and easy access to Canada's largest steel-consuming industries

(Corman et al. 25). Dofasco (founded in 1912), another major steel company

situated in Hamilton, combined with Stelco to make the city the producer of "over

half of the country's postwar steel" (Corman et al. 25). Putting most of its eggs in

one basket, Hamilton's economy became dependent upon its successful steel

industry, earning its nickname Steel City (aka The Hammer), and in the period

between 1900 all the way to 1974, raw steel production grew globally at a steady

level. But in the mid-1970s the industry met crisis. This was due in major part to

OPEC's extensive raising of oil prices which led to a 10 percent decrease in world

steel output (Livingstone et al. 9). Western companies soon engaged in price-

cutting competitions with one another, which led to "the most massive single-

industry job-losses in the history of capitalist manufacturing, with widespread

disruption of the communities that had grown up around the large integrated steel

plants" (Livingstone et al. 11). The downward trend continued as another major

recession occurred in 1982, and resulted in the unemployment of a vast majority

of Hamilton steel workers (Livingstone et al. 28; Corman et al. 27).

Understandably, this massive layoff had devastating effects on its

community. The United Steel Workers of America, Local 1005—which came into

existence in the 1870s and are lauded by the United Steelworkers as the catalyst

for the industrial labour movement in Canada (usw.ca)—is credited with being

"forged into one of the toughest unions in the country" because Stelco and Hilton

Works retained a "conservative, authoritarian management style with no formal

consultation with Local 1005 over products, prices, work organization, or

technology" (Livingstone et al. 27). But even with focused strikes and protests,

over 4,225 workers were laid off at Stelco between December 1981 and

December 1982, with only 1,400 being recalled between January 1983 and April

1983 and a subsequent 1,300 laid off between August 1983 and September 1983

(Corman et al. 29).

Many of the men (the workforce was predominantly male) had worked most

of their lives at Hamilton steel mills (or their fathers had), and had assumed that

they had a "job for life" (Livingstone et al. 28-29). But, "[b]y December 1982,

nearly all young steelworkers, with up to five years seniority with Stelco and

nearly three years with Dofasco, were out on the street" (Livingstone et al. 29).

This city-wide loss of jobs was bound to leave a bad taste in Hamiltonians'

mouths. The steel legacy that the city's economy had been built on for decades

now conjured images of change (and not for the better) rather than booming

capitalistic growth.

According to Val Patrick, a manager at Stelco, after the strike in 1981

management changed their style to relate better to workers. They initiated what

some called "charm school" or "interaction management," which stressed

cooperation between management and floor workers and eliminated the jobs of

many previous foremen in favour of people who would better embody this new

culture (Livingstone et al. 45). However, some of the workers saw things

differently; a division grievance chairperson went on record saying,

> The company clearly wants the skilled jobs to become as much like
> production jobs as possible with all the workers as inter-
> changeable as possible. In our industry, one of the main hopes for a
> young worker for job security and a decent work life is to get into a
> skilled trade. Every skilled trade job lost is one less opportunity for
> a quality job (Livingstone et al. 46; interview conducted in 1989).

Not surprisingly, there was disconnect between management and workers, and

indeed, Livingstone and his fellow researchers discovered that workloads were

overall heavier for workers post-strike, their responsibilities increased, and their

sense of autonomy decreased in spite of pay raises for those who managed to

survive the massive layoffs (48-51).

In terms of quality of life for workers, one service division tradesman was

quoted saying something that Livingstone said "reflected the general sentiment

well" (53):

> Our job really is a dead-end job. There's no possibility that we're going to advance or anything like that…They don't try to work with us, they don't try to make things better for us…We've got all these jobs now, but in a couple of years these jobs might not be there…You're just a number at Stelco. It's just that there's always this threat that you don't know what's going to happen tomorrow. That's basically it. You're always on edge there (Livingstone et al. 53; interview 152, 1984).

According to June Corman, Stelco's management issued over 8,000 layoff notices for more than thirteen weeks at a time from 1981 to 1992 (Corman et al. 57). Those with lower seniority never knew whether they would be laid off the next day, and older workers were pressured by management to retire early (60, 65). The structure Stelco adopted of a 12-hour working day enticed workers by awarding them three or even four days off in a row; however, as one steelworker explained:

> The word is CONTROL. Twelve-hour shifts create a compliant workforce…You work, eat, sleep…always looking towards your next day off. You quickly become complacent about issues and principles within the plant. Safety suffers. Dignity suffers. Unionism suffers…And that's exactly what the company wants (W. Smith, 1987, qtd in Corman et al. 68).

Further, Corman lays out how Stelco management used workers' fears of future layoffs to control them. When they complained, the routine response was something like "You should be lucky you have a job," and one can only imagine the negative impacts this had not only on workers' mental health but on the dynamics of their family interactions once they returned home (69).

Overall, while the union did win several key battles over the years and continues to "fight the good fight," Stelco's management style not only reflects

the manufacturing restructuring going on in many developed Western

economies, but also affects those who reside in Hamilton city (and the make-up

of the city in general). Ultimately, steel workers in contemporary times "are the

victims of fundamental realignment in industrial structures which is resulting

in a decrease in the importance of primary manufacturing…jobs relative to

lower paying jobs in the service sector" (Corman et al. 75).

To this day, the steel legacy remains a popular central marker of Hamilton's

urban identity, and is still a significant contributor to the Hamilton economy, with

United States Steel Corporation buying out Stelco in 2007 with the promise to

keep 3,105 Hamilton workers, and Dofasco being bought out by ArcelorMittal in

2007 (Arnold 1). However, things have changed, and to many residents the Steel

City reputation is something they would like to see drop from Hamilton's image.

Perhaps that is understandable given the tension surrounding Hamilton's steel

history; with a lot of disappointment felt by workers at the plants, and

management adopting a form of resilience that seems to favour efficiency and

profit as the driving forces into the future, it is no wonder that the fall from steel

glory in the 1970s left bruises on a population and its physical surroundings. And

perhaps it is this residual effect that in turn soured me to the whole steel industry

history as a youth. Attitudes are informed by culture, after all[2].

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[2] Trevor Cole wrote in 2009: "It's not Hamilton's economy but its landscape that is dominated by steel. But that's enough to cement the image. Drivers from Burlington and Toronto headed to Niagara approach Hamilton via the Skyway bridge, see those scabrous steel mills on Hamilton Harbour, and recoil. It's like entering a restaurant past the heaping dumpsters in the alley" (3).

James Deahl's "A Hamilton Suite"

An author who has much to share about the fallout after the steel industry's troubles is James Deahl, a Hamilton resident who has lived the majority of his life in "post"-industrial steel towns. He grew up in Pittsburgh where he worked in a steel mill, and then moved around among "the hills and rivers of western Pennsylvania and West Virginia" before moving to Canada in 1970 and settling in Hamilton (Mekler). He is the author (or translator) of over 19 literary titles, winner of several awards for his poetry, is the past President of the Canadian Poetry Association, and has taught Creative Writing and Canadian Literature at the high school, college and university levels (Mekler; JD). Impressive as these accolades are, I only first heard of Deahl through Paul Lisson, the editor of Hamilton Arts & Letters magazine (HA&L), who during a public reading at Hamilton's Locke Street library in October 2013 read several poems from Deahl's collection "A Hamilton Suite." At the time, I was struck by the conflicting images in Deahl's poetry—on the one hand, there is a regular mention of the steel mills, and of darkness, fog, and shadows in the town where employment from the steel industry sharply declined. On the other hand, there is a focus on birds, light, and a general optimism that comes from the lesser amounts of smoke and fog being churned out from the now quieter steel mills (such as in the aptly titled poem "After the shutdown, the birds are singing"). While the steel mills did provide good paying jobs for Hamilton residents, it seems that Deahl laments the heavy toll this industrial production took on its surrounding environment. It is this

tension that I want to explore as I analyze his poems through the lens of resilience.

The first poem of the suite, "Yellow Magnolia," talks of a fog that overtakes the speaker's neighbourhood at dinner time, and he describes it as "not like mist rising from lazy creek bed / or moist soil, but blowing in before a storm front like gusts of smoke from a / sudden fire" (1-3). He proceeds to talk about this unnatural (perhaps almost supernatural) fog as an eraser of trees, houses, and people. To me, this signifies an image of the effects of steel factory smoke (and perhaps metaphorically, economics); it is a pollution so thick that it overtakes its surroundings and "erases" neighbourhoods. What a striking image! In the next stanza, the speaker situates readers by saying "That was the spring Chrysler failed—making cars no one wanted, selling / them at a loss; and U.S. steel shut its Hamilton mills, the streets of Beasley lined / with destitute workers" (5-7). Not only has this fog, this residual thickness taken its toll on the physical surroundings of the speaker's neighbourhood, but the poverty that is left behind as the industry declined is palpable. There is an almost post-apocalyptic feel to this poem, as it brings to mind a zombie-like image of a place that is undead, not wholly alive but not completely forgotten. We can get a sense that the speaker is conveying disenchantment with the steel companies and in turn with the economic engine that so many depend upon even though it is unstable and changing.

What does this say about resilience? The steel companies, as discussed earlier, had to downsize as a result of global restructuring and the complex

capitalistic driving forces behind the industry. It is fair, I think, to say that the

steel companies were exhibiting resilience, albeit not to the benefit of the many

workers that were laid off. As Holling understood, resilience does not necessarily

involve returning to an imagined pristine state of equilibrium (how could the steel

mills do this, given the global context that framed their restructuring activities?),

but rather resilience is reliant on the very capitalist system that was at the root of

the crisis in the first place, and adaptation can only occur insofar as it happens

from within this system. The same boom that saw the steel industry rise to

economic power in the post-WWII era has now lost its effectiveness as domestic

supply far outweighs demand. What results is an inevitable scaling back of the

industry and a need to create and seek out new economic sources of employment.

Unfortunately for the unemployed workers whom Deahl's poem addresses, the

steel companies' changes happened more in accordance with Hayek's neoliberal

resilience model which credits the market with the final authority (rather than the

state). The speaker contemplates, "I thought of how individual people change /

while poverty never does" (9-10), denoting a frustration with the system that will

continually foster inequality. Cote and Nightingale's insistence that we need to

ask "Resilience for what and for whom?" certainly applies here: while the overall

system benefits and/ or still remains profitable for some, many workers are left

with nothing, showing that poverty is most resilient in this system (475).

     In the last stanza of "Yellow Magnolia," however, the speaker focuses on a

different, curiously optimistic image: "a yellow magnolia in a yard on Ashford"

(11). As soon as the speaker's attention drifts to this flower, the fog is described as being lifted and the flower "cup[s] sunlight, almost too bright to look at" (11-12). This light further illuminates the landscape, revealing "Laid-off men…cutting grass, / preparing gardens for new plantings. Paid always in cash, under the table, that / season without hope" (12-14). Interestingly, we see a form of resilience here that is quite different from the resilience of the steel companies, as it focuses on what workers are doing to make ends meet without their steel incomes. While the speaker's description of the "season without hope" seems dreary, it is juxtaposed with the brilliant, bright image of the yellow magnolia and the almost blinding sunlight, signifying a sense of hope where there should by other accounts be none. Why would Deahl play with such contradictions? Perhaps we can see that, although the Hamilton mills are closed in this poem, the physical environment is slowly regenerating itself, and ultimately, there are ecological and aesthetic benefits to the lack of steel production in the city. Not only that, but laid-off men are still finding ways to gain income (though not by any means am I insinuating that the "under the table" cash is equivalent to the paycheck they would make at the steel mills). The fact that the cash is described as "under the table" incites a somewhat counter-cultural image (cash is tax-free, after all) of thwarting the system that has failed to provide steady employment for the laid-off men. In a way, Deahl has highlighted what Neil Adger insists is the best way to evaluate resilience, by focusing on the underdog's reaction to adversity, and most

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importantly, by examining the positive and negative aspects of exclusion and the

institutions that regulate this (Adger 352).

The second poem in Deahl's suite, "Beasley By Night," begins much the

same way as "Yellow Magnolia," with a darkness surrounding the west harbour

and mention of the mill being closed. There is a pervading sense of doom

throughout the poem, as the speaker roves through Hamilton's Beasley

neighbourhood, where "darkness reigns complete" (5). There are no yellow

flowers in this poem; the descriptions are all sullen as we are taken into the place

that in "Yellow Magnolia" the speaker aligned with unemployment and poverty.

Interestingly, there is a sense of blurred borders or boundaries in this poem, as the

first stanza describes the west harbour as a place where "docks and water are one,

are / a mystery too deep to solve" (2-3) and "if the water cannot be seen, does it

even move at all?" (4). The second stanza continues with this border-blurring

language, describing the Beasley neighbourhood as one "where broken fences /

keep nothing at bay" (6-7). This imagery connotes a town that seems to be on the

edge of uncertainty, of not knowing what it is in a time when "the mill is shut"

(1). The neighbourhood seems doomed, with its "roving wind [that] ransacks

Hughson, Elgin, Cathcart, [and] carries no more the stench of coke[3] ovens" (7-8).

Perhaps the most striking image is the following: "Even the whores are barely

discernible, / describing circles where back lane meets street in a tangle of

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[3] Coke is a fuel that is used to reduce and melt iron ore. It is fed into a coke oven in steel plants, and heated to high temperatures for 14-36 hours (the smoke this produces is often referred to as one of the major contributors to air pollution caused by the steel industry) (McManus 40).

newspapers or last / year's fallen leaves" (8-10). The speaker takes us into a city space that harbours "undesirables" and by his account is falling apart, in a time and space "in-between" what was once a thriving city and what will soon be a ghost town. This sense of not knowing what comes next is what many contemporary neoliberal governing bodies would see as an excuse for added surveillance, for protection against the "dark" and all of its unknowability. However, the speaker in this poem seems almost lethargic, assuming a strange complacency toward the situation at hand and merely observing the effects of the steel decline.

After reading the last line of the poem, I began to think of it as more of an elegy to the promise of the booming steel industry: "under darkness' fickle kiss, the hand of death counts / out, one by one, the coins that close forever the eyes of the blind" (14-15). The use of the word blind connotes a sense of unknowing or naiveté that I suggest is indicative of how steel workers were deceived by the system that originally promised "jobs for life." The symbolism of the hand of death that counts out coins one by one is a reference to the arm of capitalism to which the industry and the people who worked at the mills were ultimately subjected. The speaker is saying that money and an emphasis on making money, which is a driving force for the steel mills, is what blinds workers to put up with substandard shift work and constant layoffs and recalls. As a result, they stick with the mills, never knowing for sure how long they will be employed or unemployed, and not seeing a way out of this cycle. It becomes clear that

according to the speaker of the poem, the Beasley neighbourhood, which he identifies as the location of many steel workers' residences, was not a happy place to be in and there is a notable absence of any form of civic resilience in this place.

The third poem in Deahl's suite, "Black Ants During The Recession," further questions what the purpose of all this steel work is, as it too takes place in Hamilton in a "post"-steel atmosphere "without its mask of drifting smoke" (1). At first, the poem seems a celebratory appreciation for the lack of work day traffic and the cleaner air. However, the speaker then begins to question the renovations happening on James Street North, saying, "Revealed by / such sudden light, all [the buildings'] scars are visible, every bit of suffering stands out as / Renaissance Revival gestures of grandeur slide into abandonment" (5-7). Interestingly, I have noticed a lot of anger throughout my research coming from people who claim that owners of buildings downtown are buying them and beginning renovations, only to abandon their efforts before finishing. There is a sense of resentment towards opportunistic developers who bail as soon as the financial rewards are not imminent. Here it seems the speaker is commenting on this; however, perhaps he too is not entirely sure if these "Renaissance Revival" plans are feasible. Tellingly, I had the good fortune of corresponding with Deahl a few times over the past year, and one of the things he stressed in his conversations is that the vested interests in Hamilton (e.g., city planners, educators, political parties, businesses, labourers, etc.) need to work together in order for any kind of city restoration project to benefit its citizens, and that is something he does not believe

Hamilton has done to date. To him, resilience is shown via modes of participatory

cooperation rather than in development projects that seek to privilege one

person's view of improvement without consulting others.

In the second stanza of "Black Ants During the Recession," the speaker

talks about the police in the city, who seem more interested in frequenting Tim

Hortons than they do at providing any sort of community service (8-9). Further,

he describes the departure of youth from Hamilton after the academic year ends,

as they "abandon their city for Toronto, Vancouver, or Calgary, seeking new

lovers / and a place to stand" (10-12). The speaker seems to feel that no one has

any loyalty to the city, nor to working together; rather, everyone is self-motivated

and as a result, "With each decade the old buildings sag a little more on their /

foundations" (12-13). But by describing the youth as leaving Hamilton to find a

place to stand, it is almost as if the speaker is also hinting that at that moment,

Hamilton cannot provide a good future for them.

The final five lines of the poem are quite revealing, as the speaker returns to

his backyard to observe ants walking along a clothesline: "They hurry east and /

west like cars on an expressway. Studied closely, the ants appear to carry /

nothing as they journey…back and forth: industry and discipline for no obvious

reason; perhaps for no reason at all" (13-17). This is a powerful ending to the

poem, as we become aware that the ants are comparable to people; in fact, it

seems that the speaker is questioning the value or purpose of work, of a sped up

world where employment and homes are transitory. Once again, the speaker in

this poem, as in the other poems discussed so far, seems to be experiencing a bit of an existential crisis; the "old ways" of doing things are changing along with a changing world and this incites anxiety about Hamilton getting lost or neglected in favour of other cities and priorities.

The next poem in his suite, "Two Observations of a City Morning," exhibits similar imagery with descriptions of main streets in downtown Hamilton exuding a sense of abandonment. For example, the speaker refers to Gore Park, the focal point for downtown Hamilton, using imagery of darkness and light: "Although far from beautiful, the city has shed its ugliness with the desperate / night, and the bewildered souls who haunt The Gore during the darkest hours / have found their temporary rest" (3-5). The speaker seems to favour the city in the light of day, whereas during the night he feels an oppressive sadness about the place. But whether in daylight or at night, the emptiness of the city remains the same—the only real symbol of life, "a pair of / sparrows pecking crumbs on the patio of the old Ceilidh House" (14-15).

The following poem, "Baltimore Oriole," juxtaposes the death of the railroad to the regeneration of forest and birdlife around the tracks. Of course, Hamilton is forever looming in the distance as "Below this / steep cut, the sprawling city dies" (4-5). While the speaker focuses on the flitting oriole, he soon says, "With no more elms for its haven, the oriole flits from maple to black / cherry to white ash, themselves soon to perish from the emerald ash borer" (9-10). The speaker somewhat cynically acknowledges the impermanence of things. The

final statement that the speaker makes shows that he feels an affinity with the oriole's (and nature in general's) situation: "Behind this mutable landscape, the oriole and I taste the incorporeal realm together" (15-16). The mention of an incorporeal world, this world without a body, to me, represents more than just an immaterial reality; it is the awareness of a sense of shared impermanence that permeates the poem, a resilient sense of Being that finds a way to persist in spite of the morphing, "mutable" nature of place.

The next poem, "Red Crane," takes a somewhat different approach to Hamilton and the steel mills, in that although I assumed from the rest of the poems that the title red crane referred to a bird, it actually refers to a building crane that is being used in the process of steel-making. Here, the steel mills are operating again; however, the speaker critiques the mills' changed processes and the sources of the steel, describing it as the "Slab / steel from South America or the sprawling mills of eastern Europe that date from / the shadowed decades of Communism" (2-4). The speaker then illuminates the irony of the Hamilton mills processing this steel, describing it as "the excess and devalued labour of the / wreckage of socialist policies in the service of an American appetite for the latest / automobiles" (5-7). The crane in the poem is a symbol of capital gain, one that, unlike the spire of a church, "celebrates its earthly city" (10). The speaker displays a sort of reverent irony for the crane, and the "vitality of the steel billets swinging in great bundles / up into a shudder of daylight from dark holds" (15-16). Unlike the other poems thus far that are centered on the shutdown steel mills,

this poem provides a contemporary image of the working mills and a critical assessment of the changed industry. The image of the steel billets swinging up into the daylight from their dark holds associates the place of steel as somewhere that is dark, and ultimately this steel brings darkness to the city.

Nearing the end of the suite, the poem "After the Shutdown, The Birds Are Singing" highlights the sentiment that has been running through the previous poems: the idea that steel is more of a curse than a blessing. The speaker is back sitting in his backyard, and becomes "bewildered by the silence," remarking that before that spring the noise of the mill would be a constant nuisance (6). Now, however, the mill is silent: "This spring there is only / birdsong and the wind through the maples; a redeeming angel has briefly / relieved us of the brutal business of steel" (9-11). He then embellishes on how clear the sky is, how wonderful nature is (being finally able to enjoy it at last!) and even suggests that people seem to grow young because of this change (12). The speaker very clearly has a love for this new "post" steel environment that incorporates nature and urban living in a now visible state of co-existence. To the speaker, this change, this age without the mass production of steel happening in his backyard, is a successful and positive adaptation. And yet, we cannot easily forget the death imagery in the first poems that spoke of an abandoned town. The tensions surrounding this idea of abandonment, of the steel town emptied of its glorious reputation, are always ghosts lingering in the historical background.

The final poem of the suite titled "Dofasco" again references the continued operation of the steel mills, the "ghost / flame rising straight into a lightening sky" (2). The speaker takes on a tone of cynicism when he then discusses the changed working conditions post-1980s recession—"reduced to four / days on, three days off; a twenty percent wage cut" (3-4). He then laments that it is most likely not even financially beneficial to run furnaces today, his cynical tone transferring to generalities: "It almost doesn't pay to do anything today" (5). The final stanza of "Dofasco" sees the speaker wandering the streets once again in the morning, before the hustle and bustle of the people and cars takes over, observing the flames from the Dofasco steel mills. Interestingly, the speaker goes on to talk about the flames as being absorbed by the daylight, eventually not being able to be seen from a distance. This fading away or hiding of the flame is then compared to "the life going on behind drawn / curtains, in the dark bedrooms, the alarm clocks just going off" (14-15). Not only is the speaker saying that life goes on, with the image of the steel mill fading into the background powerfully conveying this, but there is also a similarity between the private, foreign-owned Dofasco and the private lives of Hamilton residents—almost a mournful withdrawal, if you will, from communal spaces and ways of interacting that before was so prevalent.

Overall, James Deahl's "A Hamilton Suite" is rife with complexity and tension as the speaker attempts to understand how to relate to Hamilton as a "post"-industrial city. There is ambiguity between the unemployment fallout of the steel mill workers and the environmental benefits of a declining steel

production capacity, as well as a spiritual sense of Being that persists within this chaotic time. However, one thing seems clear: the speaker in the poems is not really sad to see the steel industry crumble. Yet how should a city rebuild itself? Deahl seems to be skeptical that the top-down changes happening in Hamilton will revitalize the city, and overall his poems seem to be just as much a lament for what is, as for what was.

Chris Pannell's A Nervous City

Providing a somewhat different perspective from Deahl's approach to Hamilton as a "post"-industrial city is Hamilton resident Chris Pannell. Pannell has been a technical writer for government and business, is on the board for Hamilton's literary festival Grit Lit, hosts a monthly reading series called Lit Live, has published five books of poetry, and has won several awards for his poems (Pannell, "Chris Pannell"). I am lucky enough to have spoken with Pannell on several occasions over the past few years, and am excited to include his latest book of poetry *A Nervous City* in this project. Part of his motivation for writing this book was the current climate of change that Hamilton is going through right now; this shift from steel to something yet to be determined is making people nervous, and Pannell wants to explore this through poetry.

Upon reading *A Nervous City*, I was surprised that only about one-third of the fifty-two poems were actually about Hamilton, and unlike Deahl's "A Hamilton Suite" which focussed mainly on the steel industry and Hamilton's East and North End, Pannell's poems were located all over urban, suburban and rural

parts of Hamilton. Interestingly, his poems about Hamilton tend to be peppered among poems about the speaker's personal memories and experiences with the people and things he observes in a current, everyday context. For example, the poem "When My Mother Met Daryl Sittler at the Supermarket" is more indicative of the general feel of Pannell's poetry collection, as it tells the story of when the speaker's mother saw hockey player Daryl Sittler in the store and asked him to sign a stick of butter. The whole third section of *A Nervous City* centers on Pannell's travels to Egypt and Europe, completely outside the physical realm of Hamilton. Why would Pannell call his collection of poems *A Nervous City* when many of the poems did not literally relate to Hamilton city? One of the reasons, I think, is that he is reconfiguring "city" to be not only a civic space, but also a part of his psyche, which necessarily follows him to whichever place he is in. Taking into account the impact that global markets had on the steel industry, it is possible that Pannell's poetry collection nicely captures the global influences that are contributors to Hamilton's (and other developed cities' worldwide) current nervousness. Besides, people are more transient now than ever before, and Pannell's vacations to Egypt and Europe highlight this hyper-global environment. Further, perhaps Pannell's cosmopolitan poems are his way of ensuring that his Hamilton is always aware of and interacting with a bigger world outside of its own perceived borders. I also wonder if Pannell and other local writers feel that they *should* write about a changing Hamilton; after all, it is a topic that has garnered massive media attention from local news outlets, artists, magazines, and

writers right now. It makes sense that a writer producing work out of Hamilton would feel the need to address this to some extent in order to be relevant in the local market. Writing is a way of working out ideas that we are not sure about, and perhaps Pannell is nervous about Hamilton's rebuilding efforts *because* the current situation is so multi-faceted.

Whatever the case, Pannell did write several poems about Hamilton as a "post"-industrial town that I will discuss in comparison with Deahl's poems. The first section of Pannell's poems (seventeen in total) is arranged under the heading "Find Yourself," and to me, his poems do deal with a speaker who is trying to grapple with finding his place in Hamilton (in all of its contexts). The poem "Burlington Street" makes a direct reference to an area of the city where the steel mills are located, and connotes a sense of loss for the once-booming steel industry: "Five lanes wide, so we can take our time / with nowhere to go, note that tumbling building— / an abandoned coil carrier" (1-3). Similar to Deahl, Pannell describes the area as "abandoned," a place that is a shell of what it used to be. People still use Burlington Street; however, it is not the center of workday activity, and now "Geese proliferate, weeds abound" (11). Perhaps the most poignant moment is when the speaker says, "What we count on now / is the fresh air of loss" (9-10). This is such a powerful way to describe the tensions that Deahl also outlines in his poetry—the decline of steel production and employment as a negative experience on one hand, contrasted with the cleaner air and environmental benefits of less production on the other. In terms of resilience, it is

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a "fresh air of loss" that the speaker in Pannell's poem describes, something not wholly positive, yet a change that people are adapting to. To signify this adaptation, the second and final stanza of the poem shows a hope for environmental regeneration (although this is not necessarily realized by the speaker, it is imagined): "But for the momentary cough / of this engine, you'd think / those were forests blooming / farther and farther off" (12-15). It seems that greenspace is thought of as a potential solution to the abandoned brownfields[4] of the "crumbling" industrial core.

Indeed, in the local media the issue of how to refurbish brownfield space in Hamilton's industrial district is a hot topic of conversation. Don McLean, a founding director of Environment Hamilton, is reported by CBC Hamilton News as saying that the city's current priorities should be focused on its hundreds of brownfield sites, saying "long-term economic prosperity should be supported by promoting the redevelopment of brownfields" (Carter 1). Indeed, the biggest impediment in this process seems to be what Deahl warned about: the lack of stakeholder agreement on issues of sustainability and how to best re-use this space. While some stakeholders have vested interests in a capitalistic form of resilience (i.e., how can we develop this land in order for it to be used in the most commercially productive way possible?), others like the speaker in Pannell's poem see the potential for the development of brownfields into greenspaces as something that would provide new life, a sort of healthy vitality to a community

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[4] Brownfields are "underdeveloped or once used industrial properties that might be contaminated" (Carter 1).

that has been deprived of natural surroundings for generations (not to mention the ecological niches it would provide for vegetation and wildlife). Indeed, Hamilton policy-makers and city developers would do well to investigate research on cultivating greenspaces on brownfield land—there have been extensive research and action plans developed by UK researchers Kieron Doick, Andrew Moffat, and Tony Hutchings which could provide useful guidelines for the city (see Forestry Commission website, 2013). Besides, as Drew Blair, a local real estate developer points out, the costs to buyers of cleaning up brownfield land for commercial redevelopment are often too high, as buyers would prefer to buy "virgin sites" rather than contaminated ones (Carter 1). Rather than see these sites deteriorate over the years, perhaps the best solution is to invest in greenspace generation on these sites. Time will tell how stakeholders respond to this. Mathieu Langlier, executive officer of Hamilton-Halton Home Builders' Association, asks a relevant question: "As a city, what do we want to do? Just push it to the side forever? Or do we tackle it now?" (Carter 1). Returning to Pannell's poetry, it is remarkable to think that this central dilemma to the changing forms that Hamilton is taking can be captured in 15 lines. Perhaps "the fresh air of loss" can be seen as a reminder that stakeholders need to communicate with neighbourhoods who directly feel this loss when considering how to best move forward with these industrial spaces.

In Pannell's title poem "A Nervous City," the speaker first talks about the promise that older generations gave to their children: "A man waved a map: *Here son! / One day all this will be yours!*" (1-2). But the poem quickly points out the

fallacy of these hopeful plans for the future, as he is riding on a Hamilton bus and hears an elderly person reminisce about "the old prosperity" of which "She wishes to not be sold and sold again / what our grandparents raised on their civic tendons / and bequeathed us" (9-12). As we saw in "Burlington Street," the promise of prosperity is lost in a place that depended on what is now an ailing industrial economy. The speaker then compares the concrete and buildings in Hamilton to body parts: "an arm…a leg / eyes from lighted towers / shine and never blink" (19-22) and the water pressure teeming beneath the city is "hot enough to weld steel on cold nights" (18). These images merge industry with human life, creating a hybrid city that seems uncertain, on edge, and out of place. Indeed, the final stanza provides the thesis for Pannell's poem: "The city shakes so subtly, we sometimes mistake it for / the ghost of its ambition, the effect of our work / the force of our breath in the night" (26-28). There is a lot going on here, starting with the mention of ghosts reminiscent of Deahl's poems, as we are reminded of the death of the steel industry. However, Pannell then captures a living moment in the city as well, as the speaker describes the city as "shaking," not dead, but not healthy either. While the city is not a single living, breathing organism per se, it is true that we often understand ourselves as having a relationship with the place we call "home," and Pannell explores this relationship by creating a somewhat empathic bond between people and place in the poem. Yet there is tension in this relationship, as the overall feeling in "A Nervous City" is one of mistrust and

there is a disconnect between citizens and any sort of agency in relation to how the city is run.

A fascinating similarity between Deahl and Pannell's treatments of the city is the use of birds, as evidenced in Pannell's "At Dover Park." Directly following "A Nervous City," this poem takes the reader to a park where "more than fifty gulls" scavenge for food (1). The speaker contrasts the cars driving by the park, "as ignorant as machines have ever been / of the society off their starboard side" with the community of seagulls which he describes as effectively ascribing to "the casual order and good government of gulls— / their ownership of everything / they need" (28-30). The next poem that follows, "City Lot / Garbage Trucks," has the same theme, with the speaker observing birds at a city dump, scavenging through "driver's seats" where "The rich mulch of modernity is fermenting / making plenty / for the / small golden finches" (9-12). There is a parallel here between the promotion of a newfound affinity with nature in "At Dover Park" (which is not realized by the hurried cars driving past the seagulls), and the birds in "City Lot / Garbage Trucks" who feed off of the "rich mulch of modernity." The speaker has slowed down and is tuning in to his surroundings in an attempt to understand how the city is changing and how nature is adapting to this. We can see that while to the scavenging birds, this deteriorated place is "Heaven on earth" (27), to the people of a city it is not an ideal sight as it indicates decline. Yet in terms of an ecological form of resilience, these images of decay and the consumption of decay are part of nature's regular cycle of renewal, suggesting an

underlying resurgence of another cycle rather than the assumed decline that many

city dwellers often perceive from within the confines of their moving vehicles.

Indeed, we get an interesting counter-insight to the speaker's ecologically

resilient Hamilton in his poem "The Snowmen of Suburbia," where he uses the

image of white snowmen from the suburbs to talk about how developers are

determining how the city will be rebuilt, "mak[ing] clear / what has been obscured

of the old asphalt / world" (3-5). This neoliberal representation of resilience is not

seen positively by the speaker though, as he explains these "new talking heads" as

"burst[ing] upon the topic of the new world / post-concrete, the new austerity, the

new / wealth, the new style of getting things done" (8-10). Here he critiques the

cookie-cutter houses and homogeneous appearance of suburban developments

(which are becoming the norm up on the escarpment, particularly with new

developments in the Rymal Road and Stonechurch Road areas), and laments that

these developers are determining the appearance of Hamilton city. The ultimate

critique of a capitalistic form of resilience comes in the last stanza of the poem:

"the end of all the old things / announced through the cold megaphone / of the

way things / used to be" (17-20). Indeed, the appeal of nostalgia, a yearning for

some sort of pre-industrial time, is what has become a major selling point for

development projects (see Chapter 2). The fact that the poem is titled "The

Snowmen of Suburbia" indicates that the people who seem to be making all of the

major development decisions are white, middle-class men (or to use the popular

acronym, WASPs), and this ignores the voices of many of the people who live in

Hamilton, as well as the process of ecological regeneration the speaker seems to favour in "At Dover Park" and "City Lot / Garbage Trucks."

Further on in his collection (after a series of poems that exhibit existential anxiousness in the everyday dealings of the speaker), Pannell's poem "After the Cycling Championships" tells a story of less-often-heard Hamilton residents. In the poem, the speaker recounts the time "a crowd of drunks from our industrial town" (2) took some bicycles and rode through the finish line of the 2003 UCI Road World Championships, "waving at the windows of City Hall" (4). The speaker seems to applaud these men, allowing them to have their moment of glory (it really does sound fun!), while frowning at the security that City Hall sent to round these men up. Similar to the erasure mentality of many city "makeover" projects, the speaker denotes disdain for the corralling approach to underprivileged populations, and the bicycle scene very likely serves as a metaphor for Pannell's wish to talk about Hamilton from a grassroots perspective. In the last stanza, the speaker says that tomorrow when all of the makeshift steel stands have been taken down from the race, "Our local men will line / before the liquor store's closed doors / and later still outside / the city's small supply of rooming houses— / trying to be as here and now / as they can be, about the days to come" (31-36). He calls attention to the fact that the future is bleak for these bicycle joyriders.

A few poems later on in the collection, "Wishing and Waiting" continues to focus on the uncertain future that seems to lie ahead for everyday citizens of

Hamilton's "post"-industrial town. The speaker in this poem laments the notion

that "it [waiting] is not a small pill, not easy to swallow" (4), conveying once

again this sense of nervousness for an unknown future. In a critique of capitalist,

neoliberal free trade models, the speaker adds "We wait out months of economic

downturn / like summer drought— / it goes on and on, a very long train / shipping

everything out of town" (7-10). Once labour and products are shipped out of

town, the speaker further laments that "Perhaps nothing but concrete will remain"

(11), exhibiting a very real fear that the diverse cultures and social aspects of

communities will not be able to sustain and reinvent themselves in this place that

is at the mercy of outsourcing. Indeed, the image of abandoned, empty concrete

structures betrays a fear that all forms of life will be quashed by neoliberal forms

of development. As the speaker reads the newspaper, he "Dread[s] others'

decisions" about rebuilding Hamilton, and readers become very aware of the

complex emotionality of relationships between public and private stakeholders

and city resources.

Pannell's final poem that I want to discuss, "The Three Fates," delivers

what I think is the most nuanced picture of a changing Hamilton. The poem is set

on "Jackson East," and outlines three presences: 1) someone holding a "dingy

white mutt on a leash"; 2) someone talking on a cell phone, her skirt blowing in

the wind; and 3) someone sitting on a bench who just injected heroin

(presumably) into her veins and is "waiting for the bliss / to kick in" (9-10).

Although at first it may be tempting to read the fates as a motif that simply

provides three static options for confronting the issue of resilience in the Hamilton

project (after all, you cannot trifle with the fates!), through his curious

juxtaposition of a poverty-stricken image, a business person, and an image of

someone trying to escape reality altogether, the speaker captures a multiplicity to

the cityscape. Therefore the question becomes less of an either/ or scenario, and

more of an intermingling of fates. After all, the city can be a home for those who

cannot afford to live in other affluent spaces, as well as a home to developers and

business-minded folks, and to people who are simply apathetic to the changing

city. Reality does not operate by stringent dichotomies, so we can surmise that the

"fate" of Hamilton is perceived by the speaker as an intermingling combination of

all of these factors.

Overall, the question to be asked is, how can the fate of Hamilton be seen in

more productive, proactive ways? Or, how can we work with this pervading

cynicism to engage in positive change? All of this doom and gloom does not bode

well for the city I grew up in. According to these poets (and I agree), a capitalistic,

neoliberal vision of resilience dominates city plans right now, so what can be

done to create a more inclusive vision? Both Deahl and Pannell rightly seem

skeptical about a "rebuilding" of Hamilton that does not take into account public

opinion and input in major decisions. Both poets also discredit the false notion

that the past was ideal, and point to the very real effects that the steel industry

had/ has on the environment, as well as the instability in employment that was a

result of global restructuring efforts. Yet at times they both also reveal an

underlying spiritual or emotional resilience through these stories of defeat (e.g.,

the men on bicycles revelling in their moment; the experience of Being with the

oriole) which is quite curious, as well as an affinity with the cycle of decline and

renewal that an ecological understanding of resilience necessarily highlights,

offering much needed glimpses of hope in this otherwise dark scenario.

Chapter 2: The Culture of "Rebuild" in Hamilton:
Weighing in on the Heritage Debate

> "From this pile that surrounds me,
> this rubble, I will try to make
> something."
>
> ~John Terpstra
> Part One of "Why Must We Die?"

When I speak of Hamilton's urban "rebuilding" projects, it is with a careful

and conscious understanding that this term, like "resilience," is at times

problematic. On one hand, many long-time residents of Hamilton agree that they

are happy to see the downtown core area being restructured. For instance, my

grandmother, who has lived in Hamilton for 56 years, is excited to see the city be

"rebuilt," as she recalls a time in the 1950s-60s when Hamilton was a bustling

center of activity and Christmas visits to the Eaton's Centre in Lloyd D. Jackson

Square were an anticipated event. (Eaton's went out of business nation-wide in

1999, and the Eaton's Centre in Hamilton has since been renamed the Hamilton

City Centre, mainly functioning as a space to house city workers' offices and a

discount store called Hart). Admittedly, I cannot help but share in the approval of

the aesthetically pleasing new storefronts, new buildings, new two-way streets

(Hamilton was notorious for having one-way streets for over 50 years), and new

"Downtown Hamilton" signs that are being erected. I cannot remember a time that

the city has looked this good! However, I also live on the Hamilton "mountain"

(i.e., escarpment) or upper Hamilton, and visit the downtown core sporadically

when I need to visit the library, Farmer's Market, or meet a friend for coffee. So, I

am analyzing this downtown urban renewal project as an outsider, in a manner of speaking (although building projects are happening on the mountain as well, mainly in the form of aptly nicknamed Power Centres that house Costco and Silver City movie theatres located adjacent to cookie-cutter neighbourhoods being constructed by the tellingly named building company Empire Homes). While it is tempting for me to wholeheartedly accept Hamilton Mayor Bob Bratina's often-voiced sentiment that "great progress" is occurring in the downtown core, with building developments and private ownership on the rise (it looks so pretty again!), as a scholar, I must work to question this massive "rebuild" project (Ruf 1). Yes, there are gains to be made in the overhaul of Hamilton city, but there are also major losses to consider. Any time the word "progress" is used by a city Mayor, it must be examined!

Often when the word "progress" is used by businesses or governing bodies to describe a changing city landscape, it aligns ideologically with a capitalist, neoliberal model of resilience. By this, I mean that these financially driven projects are fueled by the private sector, often in cooperation with city management. These developers own or have recently purchased heritage buildings or central downtown properties in order to develop them into something that looks nice and functions as a business or service that will make money. While arguably creating a functional space out of technically abandoned buildings or clearing the way for new ones is better than letting older buildings deteriorate, often in cases like this the public has little say in the "rebuilding" process, simply because they

are not financing the work and are rarely asked by developers what they would like to see happen to older buildings. As I have discussed in the Introduction, Eric Cazdyn and Imre Szeman outline the paralyzing effect that the capitalist mentality as a globalized system tends to have on citizens (*and* developers) by locating it as part of the everyday. Capitalism is pervasive, and it lacks an alternative competing system; therefore, when something goes wrong with it, we do not long for a new system because we cannot envision one, but rather, we long for the capitalist system to be "fixed" somehow (7). In effect, "capitalism itself now constitutes a very real limit to thought" (7). This has useful implications for an examination of the problematic aspects of urban development or "rebuilding" projects. Consequently, some questions to consider during this chapter discussion will be: Are "rebuild" projects of this kind inevitable? Are there ways we can undertake them responsibly from within this system? What would a responsible "rebuild" look like? And finally, are there any other imaginative alternatives to the capitalist mode of "rebuild"?

At the same time that I discuss capitalism as something that provides a very real barrier to possibilities today, I do not want to wholly subscribe to this critical point of view, because it does not provide much hope for the public to exercise agency in "rebuilding" projects—and this seemingly hopeless outlook can prevent productive action (what activists often call a "paralysis of analysis"). There are many ways that the public can interact with and guide these projects. For example, the buzz phrase "regenerative wealth creation" is used by urban

economics analysts to describe what for many is the inevitable shift from large-scale manufacturing to more community-based, social, restorative, "green" efforts (Cunningham in Lepeska 1). Others such as British architect Indy Johar call this a shift to a "civic economy" whereby a DIY culture and co-op structure of doing business will replace the old model that was too reliant on the government and private ownership to fund projects of renewal (Lepeska 1). However optimistic these theories appear, it is important to note that setting up a fresh fruit stand on Main Street or making your own furniture will not sufficiently replace the kind of income and benefits one could have gained by working in a structured manufacturing job. Both modes of work are being undertaken under a capitalist regime, even though DIY efforts are often promoted as being counter-cultural. I am quite cynical of an ideology that tells us that these kinds of efforts are *the* answer to our problems (see a further critique of this in Chapter 3, especially relating to Richard Florida's "creative class"-fueled movement). But we do need to brainstorm how we can promote civic-minded change in our cities, since they are changing regardless. As sociologist David Schalliol says of DIY-type movements, "I do think they provide a variety of models for which we can see new ways of engaging larger systemic problems and in the meantime do quite a bit of local good… more of an emphasis on these issues…can lead to policy changes" (Schalliol qtd in Lepeska 1). At least DIY efforts signify public action rather than apathy, and as hard as it is to measure their positive effects on "rebuilds" overall, it would be counter-productive to criticize them without

recognizing their worth. Therefore, it is also useful to ask what efforts can be done in "rebuilding" Hamilton that encourage civic agency.

In what follows, I will focus my discussion on the physical buildings and property sites that are currently undergoing changes in Hamilton. Many Hamiltonians seem to have a highly emotional attachment to older buildings in the city. Why is it important to preserve these historical buildings, and what is the best way to do this? I will look to different forms of literature to create a mini-archive of the varying opinions surrounding the current debate over heritage buildings in Hamilton (and ultimately the differing understandings of resilience). It will be useful to outline some of the safeguards put in place by the city for heritage buildings, as well as some of the rhetoric that gets used by citizens, city officials, developers, and small business owners in debates over which properties get "rebuilt" and who has (or should have) the right to determine how they get "rebuilt." My goal is to critically consider these points of view in order to gain a bigger picture of the issues surrounding a "rebuilding" of Hamilton city. I will conclude this discussion by analyzing Hamilton writer John Terpstra's non-fiction piece "Why Must We Die?" which valuably explores our existential connection to buildings and nicely frames the emotional value of people's relationship to place.

Hamilton's Heritage Documents

The City of Hamilton has some precautionary measures in place to protect properties that have historical significance against full-scale development. It is first useful to outline what these measures entail, as local rebuild debates often

draw from them. Generally speaking, there are two main levels of heritage

designations that older buildings and sites deemed archaeologically significant

can be listed under in the municipality of Hamilton: The Ontario Heritage Act,

and The Inventory of Buildings of Architectural and/ or Historical Interest. Both

of these lists can be found on the City of Hamilton website in the Planning and

Economic Development "Resources" section. The Planning and Economic

Development Department has published these documents (complete with

colourful pictures) in a series entitled *Hamilton's Heritage*. "Volume 1: List of

Designated Properties and Heritage Conservation Easements under the Ontario

Heritage Act" includes a list of properties that have been designated by municipal

by-law since the 1970s (this list was compiled originally between the 1970s and

1980s, when restructuring began to take place in the steel mills and city). Any

building or site included on this list is protected by the City, and builders/

developers must obtain a permit in order to proceed with redevelopment plans

(which can prove to be a lengthy process). "Volume 2: Canadian Inventory of

Heritage Buildings" is also an inventory of historical structures, but these

structures are not formally protected by the City and are simply indicated as

places of possible heritage-related interest. While there is no formal protection

against the demolition of buildings under the Inventory of Heritage Buildings,

there is an important caveat: if anyone applies to "register" these buildings with

the city, there is a mandatory 60-day wait period for developers after obtaining a

permit for demolition within which time members of the public and council can

bring up issues related to the demolition and rebuilding plans (Craggs 1). If,

during this time, the city council decides the property should be saved, they can

put it on the Ontario Heritage Act list and it will be protected (i.e., cannot be torn

down under law). As of 2007, the City of Hamilton had 241 individual properties

listed on the Ontario Heritage Act, and according to data gathered in 2000, over

7,000 heritage properties of interest (Planning and Development Dept., 1-2). The

trick many heritage building advocates are finding is to get the buildings they

want protected onto the Ontario Heritage Act list; however, this is not an easy

accomplishment because ultimately the city decides which buildings should

remain, which ones can be "rebuilt," and which ones should be demolished.

Paul Wilson[5]

One of the major losses that long-time residents see happening in the city is

the tearing down of old heritage buildings to make room for new ones. Paul

Wilson is a major public voice from the opposition side of these new

developments who specializes in writing newspaper op-eds about Hamilton's past

and present buildings, regularly published by CBC Hamilton News. Wilson wrote

an article in October 2012 entitled "History and Condos Collide in Downtown

Hamilton," which featured a critique of plans to knock down five buildings across

from Hamilton's central Gore Park. These buildings are at the center of a hot local

debate right now, garnering much media attention and raising important issues

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[5] Wilson is also a member of the Hamilton Municipal Heritage Committee (HMHC), a "municipally-appointed Committee of eleven citizens from across the City that advises Council on properties for heritage designation, heritage permits, and other heritage planning matters. Three City Councillors (Lloyd Ferguson, Brian McHattie and Maria Pearson) are also appointed to the Committee" (City of Hamilton, "Committees").

about how to best restructure older properties. Wilson explains that these

buildings were all built in the 1800s, and while they are not designated under the

Ontario Heritage Act, they are "all on the city's Inventory of Buildings of

Architectural and/ or Historical Interest" (Wilson 1). Technically then, developer

David Blanchard, the private owner of these properties, could tear the buildings

down completely and replace them with shiny new condos. However, according

to Wilson, Blanchard is willing to discuss how he might save the façades of the

buildings. Wilson does not seem overly optimistic about this, stating that it would

cost millions to save these façades, and he aligns Blanchard with capitalistic

motivations by concluding, "I do not think there is an appetite for that [spending

of money] today" (Wilson 1).

In this instance, Wilson's media appeal encouraged public outcry against

the restructuring of these historic buildings, which ultimately has had an effect

(although the debate is still ongoing) on how the project will proceed. A news

article follow-up to Wilson's story in January 2013 stated that Blanchard has

decided to keep the original façade of three of the buildings, and will only "rip the

back half off the buildings" (Ruf 1). Wilson considered Blanchard's plan to be a

decent compromise; however, he would have liked to see more of the three

buildings conserved. In even more recent developments, though, the two

remaining buildings that were not included in the façade-saving compromise were

threatened with complete demolition. Buildings 24 and 28 on King Street East

were scheduled for demolition by Wilson Blanchard developers as early as the

end of June 2013. Wilson, well-known for his outspoken championing of

historical buildings, made his case in a subsequent response by appealing to his

readers' love for history:

> When they [the buildings] went up, Canada still hadn't celebrated its 10th
> birthday. Alexander Graham Bell had just made his first phone call. A train
> had just crossed the continent in a blistering 84 hours…So yes, those
> buildings are from another time. And the owners say that time has passed.
> They declare that the structures are beyond repair (Wilson, "Full Speed" 1).

Clearly, Wilson disagrees with the owner's plans for the buildings and uses

sarcasm combined with an undeniable appeal to the moral importance of

maintaining historical buildings to make his case. Originally Blanchard, the

developer and owner of the majority of the downtown core block by King,

James and Main streets said that he would try to compromise with Wilson and

city councillors Jason Farr and Brian McHattie by saving the facades of 28 and

24 King Street too; however, Blanchard also said the expense of this work

would have to be covered by the city and they would have to agree to arrange

financing quickly.

Wilson pinpoints the major problem with the lack of city support for

conservation efforts on the fact that "Hamilton council seems not yet

convinced of the value of history and sometimes pushes aside designation

requests" (Wilson, "Full Speed"). His main concern at this point is that

Blanchard will demolish the buildings and leave an empty space there

indefinitely, or until the finances pull through for his condo and retail area

development plans (2). Rightly so, since this has happened many times before

in Hamilton's downtown core, and it is quite an eyesore to have empty spaces where once-historic buildings were standing—almost as if the city had some molars pulled and no dentures inserted in their place. Wilson's ultimate call is for Hamilton to be diligent in applying the Ontario Heritage Act to these properties in order to protect them from faulty development actions.

In an interesting twist of fate, since Wilson wrote his appeal to save these heritage buildings, CBC Hamilton News announced in July 2013 that the two Gore Park buildings will likely be awarded heritage status, making them applicable for a city heritage property grant (why didn't we know about this grant earlier?), which would provide Blanchard with the finances needed to save the buildings' façades (Huang 1). It looks like Wilson and his "People's Heritage Army" have potentially won this battle (Wilson, "Join the War"). (See Appendix A for an outline of how Wilson also uses war metaphors to frame his arguments).

But why *should* we preserve the buildings, or at least the façades, of older buildings in Hamilton? And more generally speaking, why should we be concerned with history (and just whose history is it anyways)? These questions are not posed in any of Wilson's articles; it is assumed that we all should want this on moral principle alone. Perhaps part of the appeal to this heritage building crusade is that it provides the public with an opportunity to speak up about how they want to see the city "rebuilt." By ensuring that there are restrictions on older properties, the public have a kind of guarantee that they

can "keep" some things where otherwise private developers seem to have the upper hand. But inevitably, it is the city officials (particularly those in urban planning departments) who decide which buildings go "on the list" and which ones do not. Heritage, after all, is an industry, and according to Ashworth, Graham & Tunbridge, it is most certainly a political tool that is often used in varying ways to form conceptions of "collective identities" in nation states, communities, and cities like Hamilton (54). But does this "collective identity" that Wilson has in mind represent the diversity of Hamilton's citizens past and present? And if not, how can we build a more inclusive vision of heritage while we are in the process of "rebuilding" the cityscape?

While I do not have immediate answers for many of the questions I have posed, I hope that these questions will encourage a critical dialogue surrounding the power structures that underlie Hamilton heritage campaigns. Overall, maintaining historical buildings in the downtown core, from an aesthetic position, is a good move, and I do think that public heritage debates foster civic responsibility (for example, they incite activities such as public polls asking which buildings people want to keep and which are an eyesore). However, in any debate like this we need to be cognizant of heritage's plurality and insist on change when the old way of doing things creates a barrier to this plurality. It is useful for everyone in a town to identify with a collective identity insofar as it fosters a cohesive community, but perhaps it is time for this identity to be more of a collected vision of the classes, ethnicities,

histories, gender, and other variables that constitute Hamilton. George

Hamilton, the city's founder, was a wealthy white Scotsman, after all, and up

until the mid-1840s, "Hamilton was almost exclusively a town of Anglo Saxon

Protestants" (Freeman 43). This history most certainly plays a role even today

in what Hamilton recognizes as its history; for example, the street names still

take after the founding families of the city: Hughson, MacNab, William,

Catherine (and let us not forget King and Queen Streets…every city must have

these!). Maintaining old buildings is certainly a way for those who can align

with the demographic of Hamilton's founders to stake a claim on the city by

saying "we've been here since the 1800s and we're not going anywhere." This

brand of historical resilience neglects to acknowledge the social inequalities

that it upholds[6].

But perhaps what is most disconcerting to history buffs like Wilson is

that the developments going on right now in the downtown core are happening

at an alarming speed that leaves no time for *any* civic engagement. His appeal

to history is a tool that he uses to try and slow down this whirlwind of private

developments in the hopes of getting a word in edgewise.

Raise the Hammer

Importantly, it is not just Wilson the newspaper columnist who feels

buildings should be actively protected. Ryan McGreal and many of his fellow

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[6] Further to this point, sites such as the former African Canadian settlement on Hamilton's
Mountain Brow area (now called Concession Street) were not preserved by the city—all that
remains of the homes that once sat on the hilltop is a historical sign. (For more information on the
history of the Black community in Hamilton, see Adrienne Shadd's *The Journey from Tollgate to
Parkway: African Canadians in Hamilton*).

bloggers also see this as the case. McGreal is the editor of *Raise The Hammer*,

a citizen-run blog which has the reputation of being counter-cultural because it

features citizens' voices. Yet, similar to city and developer claims, the blog's

Overview states that "our common goal is revitalizing our city, a goal that

benefits everyone." Given my discussion of resilience and rebuilding so far, we

know that a blanket statement such as this ignores the tensions surrounding

competing stakeholder's interests in city "revitalizing" efforts (i.e. what does a

goal that benefits everyone look like?). Nevertheless, let us examine how

McGreal weighs in on the heritage building debate:

> Heritage is a positive externality - a value that accrues to the community as
> a whole as well as to the property owner. When heritage is destroyed, that
> value to the community is destroyed as well, and so the community has a
> legitimate interest in its preservation.

> Designation is most necessary in precisely those cases where a property
> owner does not recognize the value of heritage and threatens to discard it
> (McGreal, "Enough is Enough" 1).

After reading McGreal's rationale for protecting heritage buildings, I must

confess that I do not feel any closer to knowing specifically why these

properties are valuable to the community (aside from a common sense appeal

to the value of history by which you would *have* to agree, because how could

you not?) Although there are potential multi-uses for heritage buildings that

can benefit the community, McGreal unfortunately focuses more on an appeal

to the value of heritage (which remains largely undefined) rather than on

particular examples of why these spaces should be preserved and how they

might function. There seems to be a substantial gap between rhetoric and reality in protectionist stances on the development of heritage buildings.

Hamilton's Economic Development Website

Next, it will be helpful to analyze the neoliberal "progress" rhetoric that Hamilton's Economic Development Office uses in its website and media releases, as they play a major role in deciding what happens to heritage buildings. The main page of Hamilton's Economic Development Office reads as follows: "With an educated workforce, stunning natural amenities and a diverse, *resilient* [emphasis added] economy, Hamilton is a prime choice for future economic opportunity. Quite simply, it's time to invest in Hamilton" (The City of Hamilton). The website boasts several properties that are being developed by large-scale companies, and encourages downtown development/ redevelopment plans. There is an overall appeal to the notion of linear time, and of Hamilton as a forward-moving city that has risen out of its slump thanks to the "resilience" of its economy.

The latest self-proclaimed "victory" is the approval of plans to develop rural land at Hamilton's John C. Munro airport in order to expand the airport to create an "aerotropolis": "The city has scored a decisive victory in its battle to reclassify hundreds of hectares of farmland around the airport for development — the largest urban boundary expansion in Hamilton's history" (Nolan & Van Dongan). The article further states that this victory was won despite opposition from Environment Hamilton and Hamiltonians for Progressive Development, who

argued "it was not needed, was too large, swallowed up valuable agricultural land and was not good planning" (Nolan & Van Dongan). Ultimately, Don McLean, board member of Environment Hamilton, lamented, "There's no recognition that this was volunteers raising a lot of money to try and have some impact on the city's decision making process. We did not get listened to" (McLean qtd in Nolan & Van Dongan). Councillor Lloyd Ferguson had this to say to the aerotropolis project's opposition: "No one likes to see agricultural lands go out of production, but we have an obligation to taxpayers to get new jobs, new assessment" (Nolan & Van Dongan). Councillor Sam Merulla also spoke about the project, saying "We need to do this if we want to continue being one of the best places to invest and create jobs — instead of relying on thousands of residents commuting to Toronto" (Nolan & Van Dongen). Understandably, the Economic Development department is driven by the goal of creating employment and business opportunities in Hamilton; however, it also becomes clear that their version of a "resilient" city is profit-driven and quite different from other stakeholders' such as Environment Canada's.

The Economic Development site also lists several programs they offer, including:

1) The Brownfields/ ERASE program (Environmental Remediation and Site Enhancement), which promises to "encourage and promote brownfield redevelopment" (i.e., erase them from the city's landscape);

2) Downtown and BIA program (Business Improvement Areas), which offers

financial assistance to those interested in developing downtown areas/ properties;

and

3) The LEED Grant Program (Leadership in Energy and Environmental Design),

which covers 50% of an urban redevelopment project's costs if the developer's

aim is to achieve LEED certification (i.e., a third-party certification program of

"green" buildings) (City of Hamilton, "Municipal Programs").

According to the Economic Development Department, these programs will "keep

our city on a positive economic trajectory" (City of Hamilton, "Municipal

Programs"). Yet we can see that the notion of "positive" is subjective, and is

mainly driven by the motive of wealth-creation. It is clear that Hamilton's

Economic Development Department does not share Paul Wilson and the Hamilton

Heritage Committee's zest for history, but rather, they are preoccupied with how

to best promote economic growth and prosperity in the present moment, by

developing (and/ or colonizing?) as much land and property as possible.

Poster at Artword Artbar

In a creative act of public opposition to Hamilton's Economic Development

Department, I saw the following poster hanging on the wall at Artword Artbar, a

bar specializing in open mic nights on James Street North (see Appendix B).

When I first looked at the poster, I did not realize that it was a farce. But after I

read the small print, I had a good laugh. The slogan at the top of the poster reads:

"Choose Hamilton…where there's nowhere else to go but up!" It could be easy to

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misread this, if you are used to the city flaunting the words "resilience" and "growth" non-stop like I am—but it is meant to be sarcastic. At the bottom of the poster, it reads: "Contact EcDev for a complimentary heritage brick. We're giving away more of them every day. Be sure to add one to your collection. Each heritage brick is signed by all members of City Council, including Mayor Eisenberger." The poster then offers fake contact information, including the phone number 1-88-NO VISION.

This poster is a subversive effort on the part of an unnamed resident of Hamilton to speak out against the unbalanced power structures that are enabling some people to make decisions that affect everyone in the city, at the expense of others. It not only uses humour to make a point (a clever, less confrontational but highly effective tool to use when speaking out against dominant voices), but it also encouraged me to think about Hamilton's Economic Development Department's plans in a different way. Namely, I understood that heritage buildings provide the sense of a lived-in place to Hamilton's landscape that is often lacking in homogenous strip malls and newer downtown buildings. Not only that, but because these buildings are so old and have been around longer than anyone in the city, there is a sense that these sites can still be claimed as public spaces (or at the very least, that newer businesses housed in these spaces are transitory renters who are often simply "borrowing" the space). When these buildings are torn down in favour of private developers' plans, the spaces themselves no longer seem part of a community; rather, they feel more like

private spaces, the physical and spatial extensions of those with financial and

political power. Public spaces are dwindling as a result of the neoliberal era, yet

are needed as places for citizens to engage in the democratic process; the

preservation of heritage sites helps foster the continuity of public spatial rights.

The poster is an excellent example of a form of grassroots resilience, whereby the

creator cleverly reappropriated neoliberal resilience rhetoric that disparages public

opinion, and exposed it for the farce that it is while simultaneously voicing his/

her contempt for the "rebuild" culture in the process.

A Word from Developers

One of the major development projects in Hamilton right now concerns

the renovation of the historic Royal Connaught Hotel located on the corner of

King Street East and John Street South. The building and property are owned by

The Development Group, which is basically a group of builders and investors who

want to see this property "rebuilt." While several initial attempts at development

failed, Rudy Spalluci and Ted Valeri, two local developers, decided to go ahead

with their plan for The Residences of Royal Connaught condominium project

(Tennant 43). They are first going to refurbish most of the existing Royal

Connaught building, a hotel that has a history of being a once-grand building in

Hamilton's downtown core, and eventually add additional towers to the project, to

total 700 units, "with 13,000 square feet of retail space stretching from King

Street along Catharine and Main" (Tennant 43). Spallaci is quoted as saying "To

be able to work on that type of building means a lot to our firms, and when it's

finished, it's going to mean a lot to the core. It's going to bring life back to the

core" (Tennant 43). Spallaci's development partner Valeri also adds that the

project may take over 10 years until it is completed, but that "Over 10 years,

you've got a complete city block developed, all self-contained" (Tennant 43).

While this project is sure to create jobs and bring economic benefits to the city, I

find it worrisome that only a few people are determining the make-up of a full city

block.

James Tennant, the author of the article featuring this discussion of the

Connaught, remarks that Spallaci and Valeri plan to "restore the Edwardian

façade, the glass staircase in the lobby, the glass railings, the columns, the

chandeliers and plaster mouldings" but then further notes that "It's out of respect

for a landmark, but it's also part of the sell. You can only own a piece of the

historic Royal Connaught if it remains, in essence, the historic Royal Connaught.

History, after all, is the point" (43). History here takes on a different meaning than

it did for Paul Wilson—from a neoliberal development perspective, history is a

big ticket item in the marketing of Hamilton property. Yet even the private

purchase and development of the Royal Connaught does allow for the resilience

of a well-known public symbol to be fostered. Arguably this is better than just

letting the building rot. Overall, the preservation and restoration of Hamilton's

older buildings does have the potential to serve the interests of multiple parties in

the debate, but the motivations for preservation (which are steeped in differing

ideologies) are different, and it is a lack of respect for the pros and cons of these varying aspects that seems to be creating and maintaining a rift between groups.

A Word from Small Business Owners

The last segment that I want to include in my mini-archive of discussions on Hamilton's "rebuilding" efforts offers several opinions from small business owners, particularly with property near the Gore Park strip (where the Blanchard properties and the Connaught are located) that has garnered so much attention thus far. I first return briefly to the blog *Raise the Hammer* in order to engage with some public statements submitted by small business owners (Ryan McGreal, ed., "Downtown Property").

Holly Pocsai, owner of popular store White Elephant on James Street North, says the following about heritage building preservation (note: she renovated the building that now houses her store):

> There is something so inherently unique happening in downtown Hamilton. A momentum happening completely organically to renew the life of this city. Little has to be done, except to stand back and PROTECT this momentum; to make decisions in our city's best interest, not in the best interest of developers. We need heritage buildings preserved to maintain a beautiful, interesting, historical, and distinctive street-scape…This [Gore Park] is our city's square. This is where it all began, where our beating heart lies.

Another business owner, Dave Kuruc of Mixed Media (who also played an instrumental role in starting the James Street North Art Crawl), says the following of Paul Blanchard's Gore Park development plans:

> Dave here from Mixed Media at the corner of James and Cannon. Our historic building is about the same age as the two in Gore Park that Blanchard wants to tear down. When we bought this place five years ago, it

was owned by an absentee landlord from Toronto who pretty much just collected the rent and let this once proud and contributing building degrade. We are but temporary caretakers in these buildings' long lives. My wife and I are working with the limited resources we have to return dignity and life to this building.

Interestingly, both business owners use rhetoric that connects the buildings to life. For Pocsai, the Gore Park area is "where our beating heart lies" and for Kuruc, the buildings are a certain "age" and we are "caretakers in these buildings' long lives." If we recall in Chapter 1, Chris Pannell made similar references in his poem "A Nervous City" to various physical aspects of the city such as comparing roads and street lights to limbs and eyes. Certainly Hamiltonians feel protective of the physical landscape of their city, as evidenced by their conceptualization of it as being *alive*. Lakoff and Johnson call the kinds of ontological metaphors involved in this form of rhetoric "personification," and confirm that they "allow us to comprehend a wide variety of experiences with nonhuman entities in terms of human motivations, characteristics, and activities" (33). This rhetoric does the work of attributing humanity to buildings, thus invoking and/ or exhibiting our sympathy (perhaps in a strange way, empathy, even?) for these landmarks and encouraging us to think of them as we would a friend or loved one.

There are some small business owners, however, who see the city's heritage requirements for buildings in Gore Park as an unnecessary expense. One of the most recent, bustling places to hit Gore Park is Burrito Boyz, a takeout/ dine-in restaurant specializing in extremely delicious burritos. Since opening in November 2012, the restaurant located at 66 King Street East has drawn in a

steady stream of customers (myself included). However, the building falls under

the jurisdiction of the Downtown Heritage Character Zone, which is an area

designated by the city as falling under specific guidelines that "protect built

heritage resources and character in the downtown" (Kenny). In the case of Burrito

Boyz, this means that their building façade must increase their glass frontage from

28 percent to 80 percent (Kenny). The problem with this requirement is that

Burrito Boyz is part of a chain of restaurants, with sister locations in Toronto, and

its owners were trying to match the appearance of these other stores (Kenny).

They did not think that the city would take issue with the fact that their storefront

was not made entirely of glass like the adjacent Bingo Hall or Cash Money Mart,

because they were drawing in customers to a building that beforehand was "an

abandoned space" (Kenny). I do wonder how glass storefronts maintain the

integrity of heritage buildings; if anything, this regulation seems to maintain a

homogeneous appearance in the downtown core. The city ended up accepting an

amendment to Burrito Boyz's storefront requirements, and now they only have to

have 49 percent glass rather than the initially required 80 percent (Kenny). The

owners have to make the required renovations to their storefront as soon as

possible. Considering they only rent the space and already owe over $150,000 in

start-up costs, this is a major hit to their budget (although to be fair, they did know

about this storefront requirement last year, but just hoped it would not be

enforced) (Kenny).

Perhaps promoting the rescue of heritage buildings is a noble goal, but realistically, it can also be an unwanted expense. Should the city compromise with business owners in cases like this? If they want to see the downtown core generate economic growth perhaps they should offer more incentives to those struggling to make this happen. Ideally, by presenting a variety of stakeholders' opinions on "rebuilding" in Hamilton, we can recognize that the issues surrounding projects of this scale are complex and feature differing motivations. Alternatively, there are also similarities in each person's goals: namely, stakeholders all seem to want to create something that they believe will benefit Hamilton as a city, and if they can figure out how to foster this collaborative spirit, maybe the city can be "rebuilt" in ways that are more mutually beneficial.

John Terpstra's Part One of "Why Must We Die?"

After considering stakeholder perspectives as represented in the media, it becomes clear that there is a highly emotional component underlying the heritage building debate. How can we work to understand this relationship between city residents and the spaces they ultimately share? For my final consideration, I will focus on local Hamilton writer John Terpstra's creative non-fiction work "Why Must We Die?" In this piece, Terpstra explores his relationship with built geography in Hamilton, and the generations of people who live(d) in this place, paying particular attention to the architecture of the past and its physical, historical, and spiritual remains in the present. Part One of this series brings a unique and fitting aspect to a discussion on "rebuilding" Hamilton, because it sees the buildings as markers of "home," and grapples with notions of place and belonging that arise during the speaker's encounter with these buildings. Furthermore, the speaker is in a vulnerable state of grief, and by engaging with the buildings and place in a deeply personal way, he becomes psychologically resilient in the face of despair.

Before I analyze Part One of Terpstra's series, it is useful to provide a brief introduction of the writer. John lived with his family in Hamilton since the age of twelve, and spent brief stints in Chicago and Toronto for university before settling in Hamilton with his wife Mary. He built a successful career as a carpenter, and is a poet and writer with several widely received publications, including seven books of poetry and a non-fiction book entitled *Falling Into Place*

which is about Hamilton. In fact, he is often thought of as one of the most

respected writing talents to come out of the city, and was nominated for a

Governor General's Award for poetry in 2004 (johnterpstra.com).

In Terpstra's "Why Must We Die?" the speaker admits up front that "It

was not a good time" and "It's been a difficult year, personally" (1; 11). Yet

through his meditation on grief, he establishes a connection between brick

buildings and the legacy of grief that a centuries-old parapet wall seems to

possess: "The grief is built right in, baked into the heft of each brick" (11). The

wall acts as a sort of personified portal to the past and present of Hamilton, the

place that the writer has come to identify with as "a geography that feels like

home to me" (8). As a reader, I begin to question whether the building really

possesses some sort of agency, some sort of access to a place and time that we

would not otherwise be able to experience (almost as if the wall itself was a

storyteller). The wall is named a parapet on the first page of the piece, and its

technical importance to the structure of the house is described in great detail by

the speaker, almost akin to an outline of the anatomy of a human being (1).

Importantly, this particular wall is on the outside of a series of a small row of

houses, and is therefore an "exposed end," a corner wall that is vulnerable and "in

full, public view," mirroring the writer's own feelings (1). He soon claims that

"Walls talk. They speak in simple facts of brick and glass," suggesting that the

stories he gleans from the wall are in part because of its long-standing presence,

but they also have to do with how the speaker interprets it in relation to his own

existential perception. After all, how can a wall *make* someone feel grief? It is not

necessarily a mystical object; however, a building certainly can incite memories,

which lead to remembrances of city and home for the speaker.

It becomes obvious that the writer has done his research, as he begins to

place a woman from the nineteenth century into his imaginings of the surrounding

city, saying "You can't help drifting in and out of the nineteenth century when

you live in this neighbourhood, because that's when most of it was built" (3). He

names the woman Esther, and follows her down the street as she takes in her

surroundings, using her as a vessel to tell the stories of the buildings in the York

Boulevard area of Hamilton. Importantly, when he envisions Esther he places the

date as being "later than 1891," readily admitting that he has done his research at

the local library; however, once Esther goes home, the speaker goes further back

in time to 1885, when Peter and his wife Elizabeth lived in the parapet house (4).

He then laments as he consults the records of the house that Peter died in 1891,

and it takes the speaker off-guard as he is reminded that everyone must die (4).

There is a connection that the speaker has found via the parapet house with Peter,

Elizabeth, and even Esther—an understanding that everyone (and thing) has a

lifespan and dies, including the speaker.

After this thoughtful imagining of history, the speaker guides readers to

the main reason for his meditation on grief: his ailing mother Anna who lives in

an assisted living home for seniors (5). Although his mother struggles to

remember things, he reminisces that she had a strong memory for the family home

(6). One of her main memories was of a walk she took with her father, where her father pointed out to her the "signature pattern of brickwork above windows and around doors" that his father had built (6). No wonder the speaker seems to have a preoccupation with the bricks of the parapet wall; not only does the wall incite an imagining of local history, but it also connects to the memories the speaker has of his mother's stories of their ancestry. There is a tangled web that is woven throughout the piece of relations and interrelations, all recalled through the researching and remembrances of brick buildings known to their owners as "home." What is home, seems to be the question that the speaker grapples with, along with the inevitable existential musing "I would like to know where I [my existential Self] am" (10). Perhaps his sense of psychological dislocation comes in part from the fact that his parents grew up in the Netherlands, and the speaker is a first-generation Canadian. In fact, the speaker states that he has a theory that we can generally only trace back our history to our grandparents, and that "When children leave the country of their birth, the family tree is pruned" (6). The wall is simultaneously a sort of connection and separation for him with a time and place that he did not experience—and yet, this time and place are a very real part of him. The speaker even goes so far as to imagine that Paul, Emily, and Esther could be his "grandparents' contemporar[ies], an ocean apart," thinking that his family in the Netherlands must have been doing similar things to what these Hamiltonians were doing during the same time period (8). He then says "maybe I could adopt her [Esther] as the grandmother I never met, one who lived in this

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geography that my parents adopted" (8). Along with Esther, the speaker seems to

think of the parapet house as a surrogate house, as becomes evident when he

laments that the house his mother and her family were born in was demolished in

the 1970s (7). In a world where the speaker struggles to find his place, where he

loses confidence in "the world as [he's] always known it," he wonders why the

window does not fall out of its frame, or the bricks of the house do not dislodge

(7). Through the house, the speaker finds a constructed, solid home for himself;

he makes a place *mean* something to him.

What Terpstra captures nicely here is the notion that buildings not only

contain history, but they also seem to solidify a sense of place within one's own

psyche. While the physical building may be torn down, like his mother Anna's

childhood house, the memories still remain and can be incited by other's stories

(such as the ones he uncovers in his research on the parapet house) about place.

Nearer to the end of the piece, the speaker really owns the fact that Hamilton is

the place he identifies with home, particularly through his discussion of the

history of how buildings were made in Hamilton's York neighbourhood. He

provides a fascinating discussion of how settlers originally built houses, starting

with a hole in the ground (not unlike a massive grave) and building from the

basement up, with stones found near the escarpment and surrounding area,

literally incorporating local geography into the structures. Using the same date

reference as the one he used for the destruction of his mother's house, he narrates

the following: "Until the 1970s, York Street was the main commercial drag for

the neighbourhood, when it was torn down in its entirety in the name of urban

renewal and road widening" (10). Urban renewal seems to be a shared experience

in both Hamilton and the country his parents came from. During this time, he says

"reclaimed brick" from the many older buildings being demolished to make way

for apartment complexes was in demand in Hamilton, and it was even called York

Salmon or West Hamilton Salmon, because the brick from that area was a salmon

colour (10). There seems to be a grieving for the lost buildings, whereas now

newer buildings, with the help of transportation and new processing methods,

contain brick that "could be any colour because they came from anywhere and not

just the backyard" (10). There is a sense of loss here, as we see that newer

buildings are denied the local fabric that older ones (which are now being

demolished) contained. However, the writer then ponders that "crazed lovers of

their surroundings" who seek this kind of knowledge and have suffered grief from

watching the walls come down (and perhaps have helped to preserve the bricks

when they have come down) are potentially in a relationship with a building that

remains unreciprocated. After all, his question is poignant: "Can bricks and

mortar love the ones who live within their walls?" (10). Logically, a house cannot

love those within its walls, and yet the speaker then ponders how, in a roundabout

way, a house is "able to take in, to absorb, the feelings of those who live there"

(10). It is when he fully realizes his own mortality, after contemplating his

mother's impending death and the instability of home and place, that he starts to

suddenly see his own home—a place he had thought of up until now as a "refuge"

and "retreat"—as offering "no solace" (11). He then says, "My walls came down, metaphorically speaking. I felt exposed and insecure and homeless"; and yet, the parapet wall physically remains, is "implacable," and "It may not last forever, but it will easily outlast your grief; which means that your grief will not last forever" (11). In the midst of his existential anguish, the writer exhibits a curious psychological resilience to the understanding that the old wall has been through many generations of grief, and still remains, and readers conclude that it is he who lives in the house with the parapet wall (11). In his closing lines, the speaker talks about resilience, likening his climb out of grief to the construction or building of a home: "I will try to build my way up and out of this hole, brick by brick" (11). Ultimately, he must "rebuild" his inner life through a spiritual means that only he can define, and through his personal interactions with place he has been able to psychologically find ways of coping with his grief.

Terpstra's representation of the wall, home, and place in Part One of "Why Must We Die?" illustrates the value of our emotional attachments to physical buildings, as we often see ourselves—our past, present, and future—reflected or preserved in physical structures. Just as it is inevitable that people come and go, so too do buildings; however, perhaps it is healthy for stakeholders to encourage the preservation of heritage buildings, insofar as it reminds us that there were people here in this place, calling it home, before we arrived, and there will be people after us. It is important for Hamiltonians to consider what kind of geographical legacy they want to leave for future generations. By inciting an

existential kind of coexistence between himself and the buildings, the speaker in

"Why Must We Die?" illuminates the bridging function that buildings carry out in

the defining of (and caring for) place, and inevitably of self.

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Chapter 3: The Creative Class and Gentrification:
Can Art *Really* Be The New Steel?

> "You were right about this Jedi:
> forming class consciousness is a
> political project."
>
> ~Darth Vader
> *The Art of Gentrification* by Simon Orpana

As we have seen so far, the "rebuild" dilemma is fraught with complexities, where competing stakeholder interests (each of which have their own pros and cons) are pitted against one another in a struggle for urban space. Many believe these conflicts are preventing the growth of the city that politicians and business owners seem so optimistic about. Indeed, I do agree that a paralysis by indecision is one of Hamilton's major stumbling blocks. While in Chapter 2 I attempted to outline the various positions on "rebuilding" (and in turn, resilience) through the current debates on heritage building preservation, this chapter will thoughtfully critique what many believe to be the way forward in Hamilton and other "post"-industrial cities: the creative class. In what follows, I will first outline the major tenets of this "creative class" rhetoric, and then consider various ways of engaging with the rhetoric through the analyses of Tings Chak's graphic novella *Where the Concrete Desert Blooms*, Sarah Mann's article "The Creative Class Struggle," and Simon Orpana's 'zine *The Art of Gentrification*.

As outlined in Chapter 1, Hamilton's economy has experienced massive restructuring and change over the past 30-40 years, and this has left many wondering if the city will ever recover from such an upset and/ or be willing to

change their own perception of the city in order to reconfigure a more hopeful

image of the place they call home. While some call for an increased creation of

blue collar jobs, the reality is that the economy is shifting from a manufacturing-

based to a more service-oriented, knowledge-based economy. As Livingstone

outlined in his research on Hamilton steel mills, it is important to note that this

dichotomy between manufacturing and knowledge-based economies is not

entirely accurate, because in many ways the two facets have merged and are

dependent upon one another (for example, steel mills have been using

sophisticated computerized systems for decades now) (Livingstone et al. 3).

However, it is true that the factory worker jobs of the post-WWII era have

adapted and changed via a form of resilience that has resulted in a hybrid, multi-

faceted mode of production—the simpler "blue collar" form of past jobs is fast-

disappearing. So how can Hamilton adapt to this changing workforce and culture?

American[7] urban, social, and economic theorist Richard Florida's ideas in

The Rise of the Creative Class have been adopted by many cities currently

engaged in "rebuilding" debates, including Hamilton. In May 2008, Hamilton

held its first Economic Summit, where more than 125 civic leaders from private

businesses to non-profit organizations gathered to plan the economic sectors and

development projects Hamilton should invest in to revitalize its economy. Florida

was the keynote speaker, and said that a creative workforce was the key to

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[7] Florida was acquired by the University of Toronto in 2007 and is currently the Director and
Professor of Business Creativity at the Martin Prosperity Institute, Rotman School of Management
(Martin Prosperity Institute).

Hamilton's economic growth (MacLeod 2). In 2009, Hamilton city "began full-force promotion of the Hamilton Creative City Initiative to support the creative economy" (Mann 1). Certainly Florida's message had an effect on city planning efforts, as the city has since concentrated their investment efforts in the business, arts, health, and education sectors. For example, the McMaster Innovation Park was a building project funded by McMaster University and the Federal Government in 2005, which refurbished the old CAMCO fridge-making factory and turned it into a large business and research park (complete with art exhibits on the walls by local artists). The concept behind this project was to lease the massive amounts of space in the building to various business entrepreneurs, government agencies, creative groups, and partners worldwide in order to, as their slogan says, "Co-locate, Connect, Commercialize" (McMaster Innovation Park). This project has grown from one initial building to two completed buildings, with a third one in the works. Another example of Florida's ideologies in action is the Art Crawl, a monthly event that occurs on James Street North. This event has been lauded by many politicians as something that will revitalize the James Street North area—and in some ways, it really has, as new shops and cafés are opening for business on a regular basis. However, there are other facets to this promotion of the arts as the saviour of Hamilton that are seriously flawed. One of the main objections many people have to the "development" of James Street North and its surrounding area is that rent prices have skyrocketed due to the area's popularity with young, urban hipsters and business owners looking to benefit from their

patronage (more on gentrification in this area shortly). Additionally, the slogan

"Art is the New Steel" has been a trendy way of promoting this new culture in the

core, and you can even buy T-shirts at the Art Crawl that say this. But

realistically, how can selling some paintings and attracting middle-class

escarpment dwellers down to the core for one night a month even come close to

creating the same revenue and employment opportunities that the steel industry in

Hamilton did at its height? (Or even as the steel industry stands now? There are

still almost 5,000 workers employed in the industry in Hamilton—are we

supposed to just forget this?) How should we address these issues? Because

Florida's research (and that of other urban theorists—although Florida is by far

the most charismatic) had such an impact on Hamilton's policy planning,

including the "Art is the New Steel" mantra, it is first important to analyze the

major tenets of his work.

Richard Florida's "Creative Class"

To Florida, the Creative Class is a new and dominant social class that has

arisen over the past several decades as economies have been making the transition

from industrial modes of production and employment to more service- and

knowledge-based modes. Florida credits creativity with being "a fundamental

economic driver" which has spawned a new class of workers that encompasses

"science and technology, arts, media and culture, traditional knowledge workers,

and the professions" ("Revisited" vii). A major reason for this shift, Florida says,

is that traditional skills can be outsourced or automated, whereas creative skills

and the ability to "think big" are highly sought after (and therefore, necessarily equate to employment stability) (viii). Florida uses the term "creative" quite loosely, defining it as "an ability to be able to sift through data, ideas, and materials to come up with new combinations that are useful" (18). Creativity in this sense is innovative (a buzz word often favoured by developers and politicians), self-assured, and "subversive," as creative people are not afraid to question and even break the rules (19). Florida clarifies that human potential can "only be fully realized when each and every worker is recognized and empowered as a source of creativity" (xiv). This includes creating a new culture of appreciation for service workers, whose often menial jobs provide little personal satisfaction without the nurturing of their creativity. (Although I see the merit in this, how to do this is another issue that Florida neglects to satisfactorily address).

Florida's major claim to legitimacy is that his ideas are steeped in statistical analyses, and in the Preface to his first book, *The Rise of the Creative Class* (2002), he outlines how he created measurements such as the "Gay Index" and the "Bohemian Index" to measure the density and characteristics of artists in a region (apparently neighbourhoods with high populations of people who are gay and people who play bongos are a measurement of creativity), noting that they correlated with "high-tech hotspots" in the United States ("Preface" xxiii). His main goal in this book is to get creative people to see themselves as a class, encouraging them to "build new forms of social cohesion appropriate to the new Creative Age" (xxv). He ultimately asks cities to re-consider where they should

invest in the future, ideologically aligning urban growth with his Creative Class (xxv).

A common critique of Florida's work is that it is elitist, because the upper and middle classes are the ones who will benefit from his class-based formulation of "creativity"; in fact, his "creative class" quite obviously is designed to privilege people in the highest-earning third of the work force, including financial and business "innovators." As mentioned earlier, he does say that his doctrine of "creativity" extends to service workers such as hairdressers, landscapers, and bus drivers; however, he does not provide any viable solutions to see this through such as wage laws or organized labour (MacGillis). Florida does attempt to address this classist critique in his 10th Anniversary edition of *The Rise of the Creative Class, Revisited* in a final add-on chapter entitled "The Geography of Inequality," where he says that he wanted to include a chapter on inequality in the first edition of his book but the editor told him it was already too long (showing us where his priorities lie) (354). He then spends most of the chapter listing all of the citations he used in subsequent books and articles that address issues such as rising rent prices in "creative" urban areas and the "exodus" of people in lower classes to the sub- or ex-urban outskirts of successful city centers (355). He appeals to statistical data to show that even though there is greater income inequality in "creative"-based centers, "wages across the board are still higher in Creative Class locations" and consequently lower in non-"creative" centers (361-362). Florida concludes that "members of the Working and Service classes…are

actually economically better off in more affluent and knowledge-based regions

with higher concentrations of the Creative Class"—even though they do not "fit"

into his ultimate class designation (365). Jamie Peck, a professor from University

of British Columbia who specializes in Urban and Regional Political Economy,

wrote a thoughtful critique on Florida's "creative class" logic that pinpointed the

problem with the guru's message (and its popularity with government planners

and private developers) as both a symptom and a cause of the widespread

"neoliberalization"[8] of contemporary urban culture.

 Florida has since published several more books elaborating his "creative

class" theory, including *Cities and the Creative Class* (2005), which goes into

further detail about the data he has collected linking urban growth with creativity,

and *Who's Your City?* (2008), which stresses that where you live is the most

important decision of your life. In terms of place, Florida is convinced that

creative types tend to flock to urban centers, and has identified 40 "mega-regions"

that have the most potential for recovering and/ or developing in the future

(Hamilton is included in a massive generalized body that includes Waterloo,

Toronto, Ottawa, Montreal, and New York State) (Florida, "Rise of the Mega-

Region"; MacLeod 1). However, what was originally an optimistic view of the

potential for every city to expand and grow has most recently turned into a death

sentence delivered by Florida to many "post"-industrial cities.

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[8] Examples of this "neoliberalization" are the intensification of competition between cities, the marketing of a city, and the lack of government agency and/ or intervention in developments (Peck).

While at the beginning of the millennium Florida preached to *every* city that they had potential (after all, his speaking fee was $35,000-$40,000, so clearly he benefitted from this), he subsequently suggested that cities in mega-regions have the potential to succeed, but others likely do not (MacGillis). This becomes very clear in Florida's aforementioned *Who's Your City?*, which is a guide built on the premise that people need to strategically choose where they live according to what their individual wants and needs are (in other words, if you live in a city that is not moving on up, you need to move on out). Yet there is much to be said for place that Florida does not take into account—namely, that many people have psycho-social-spiritual investments in the places where they live, and do not see the transient lifestyle that Florida advocates for as a desirable option. Not to mention the fact that urban centers filled with transient workers will lack a sense of grounded community. Florida all but ignores the emotive facets of urban life that writers like John Terpstra see as fundamental to our sense of belonging and identity. As geographical planner David Lewis is apt to point out, "Given that he [Florida] talks so much about the value of place, I'm surprised that he ignores that no matter what the situation is in a community, there's still a value there. It ignores the reality that some people are attached to their place" (Lewis qtd in MacGillis). Certainly, the literature that I have discussed so far has exhibited Hamiltonians' strong attachment to place, and the tension-filled nature of these writer's discussions only speaks further to this notion of attachment; people do not want to have a say in what happens to their city if they do not care about it.

Tings Chak's Where the Concrete Desert Blooms

Former McMaster University undergraduate student Tings Chak has much to say about Hamilton as place in her 2010 graphic novella[9] *Where the Concrete Desert Blooms*. She begins her personal story in Hong Kong, where she was born, and details briefly her memories in 1989 of the Tiananmen Square massacre which prompted her family to immigrate to Canada. They settled in the Toronto suburb of Thornhill, which Chak describes as a "gentle" place to grow up (9). However, as she became a teenager and was exposed to the urban culture of Toronto, she saw Thornhill as "more and more of a non-place" (11). There is a distinct parallel drawn between a sense of placelessness and suburban spaces, as Chak readily plans to leave Thornhill for university because "once you've seen one suburb, you've seen them all, just like [H]ome [D]epots, with the same floor plan" (12). At first I agreed with Chak: as someone who grew up in suburbia, I too tend to see contemporary suburban spaces as often having a homogeneous aesthetic (and demographic). However, this stereotype discounts the inevitable heterogeneous make-up that exists in any place, and it is useful to be aware of how we tend to become biased in our opinions of place based on our own experiences. Just as there is diversity in urban centers, so too is there diversity in suburban neighbourhoods—it just often presents itself in subtler ways, and my dislike stems more from a dissatisfaction with neoliberal-minded developers' approaches to spatial design and the American Dream ideology that these spaces

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[9] Although Chak's work is labelled a "graphic novella" on the front cover, it is useful to note that it is not a work of fiction, but rather, it is an illustrated work of non-fiction or a graphic memoir.

have stereotypically represented rather than to an entire demographic of people. However, perhaps this is why groups like Hamilton's Heritage Committee play an important role in the debate about how to best "rebuild" Hamilton's downtown core—aesthetically whitewashing an urban center would destroy its "character."

Chak equates "place" almost immediately with Hamilton (after all, she has little to say about the suburbs), exploring some of the history of Hamilton first by recognizing the "native neutral people" who lived in the area long before European colonization brought about founder George Hamilton and our modern conception of the city (15). She is quick to point out that although Hamilton at its height produced 60% of the country's steel, its largest employer now is the health sector, and "Hamilton still cannot shake its image, unlike some sister steel cities" (15). Even Chak confesses the influence that this failed steel image had on her, saying that the reason she came to Hamilton was for the Arts and Science program at McMaster, and "aside from my predilection for the grungy side of things, there was little about Hamilton that appealed to me" (16). One of the most poignant images in Chak's novella is a picture of her diving into the center of a massive donut and a description that reads, "Hamilton is often called a donut with its sprawling suburbs surrounding a dying core" (19). This donut is a clever metaphor used not only to indicate the city center, but also in reference to the notion that Hamilton is a donut producing and consuming city (i.e., the birthplace of Tim Hortons). She reveals that after she dove into the donut hole, so to speak, and some time passed, she began to see Hamilton as a multi-dimensional

community. She discovered (as a tourist) Hamilton's many waterfalls, she attended a Tiger Cats football game, she met people, and she fell in love. In other words, as she spent more time in Hamilton, she grew to see it as more than just a "dead space," but rather as a place that contained life and had stories to tell.

Through her use of a "grass through concrete" image, Chak explores the potential for growth and "reclamation" (a word used throughout the novella) in Hamilton today. Yet there is a tension present in the rest of her work that speaks to some of the difficulties present in Richard Florida's "creative class" theory as well. It is certainly a better approach, in my opinion, to go directly to the people who live in the city and gather their stories about Hamilton (as Chak has done) in order to gain an understanding of the psycho-social-spiritual aspects of an urban locale's fibre. Arguably, Florida is missing this vital component in his analysis of urban spaces, sticking to statistical analyses to prove his points rather than going into the neighbourhoods and communities where people have built a life and using their input to inform his findings. Yet Chak has a somewhat idealistic vision for Hamilton that often ignores some of the culture and spirit that are already present in Hamilton too, particularly because of the people she talked to (and the ones she necessarily did not, because she cannot talk to everyone). For example, the main stories in her novella are from people that are potentially in Florida's "creative class" designation: white, middle-class students, writers, artists, and community activists. I have also run into this dilemma in the context of my thesis, although the purpose of this project differs somewhat from Chaks attempt to

gather local stories and voices, because I am analyzing popular published

literature. While I am not sure how to avoid this pitfall other than to purposely

seek out more diverse voices, I do think that Chak's work lacks this critical

component and perhaps this is why she portrays the city as a place of untapped

potential rather than as a place where pockets of realized potential already exist.

For instance, one place of "realized potential" is the Beasley neighbourhood

skateboarding park, which has turned an "abandoned" park into a place where

youth can skateboard and gather together, sparking a renewed sense of

community and belonging for a young demographic that often has no place.

However, there is redemption in the complexities and tensions present in

Chak's novella that are not seen in Richard Florida's manifesto. This notion of a

dead city that has only to wake up and realize its potential underlies much of

Chak's novella, at the same time that she also finds the beauty in the architecture

and the "discoloured brick walls" and "an oxidized roof" around the city, musing

that "I thought, if I could frame all these images, I would build a mosaic so large

and beautiful, tiled in this city's abandonment" (58). Indeed, overall it does seem

that Chak begins to understand what lies beneath the abandoned façade that she

associates with much of downtown Hamilton, as she shares the following: "A

friend once described his relationship with Hamilton as one of hiding, and maybe

this is true for many of us, and maybe for those who stay, we could never imagine

something better or a Hamilton worth fighting for, and we continue living the

small" (68). Graham, a business consultant who lives in Hamilton, agrees with

this in Chak's novella on the following page, citing a kind of "poor pride" or a "you're not working class enough" mentality that prevents the city from changing its industrial image (71). On the flip side, he then chastises the city for endorsing development projects that erase historical buildings (particularly the replacement of city hall's marble façade with concrete, which Chak laments as the loss of "an icon of international style architecture" [69]). Chak does come to realize that "no place is ever empty" (77), but this realization directly contrasts with her love of abandoned buildings, which betrays dueling logics at work. But perhaps these ideas can, do, and should co-exist.

Chak, through various forms of play, does try to reclaim public spaces in Hamilton, engaging in activities such as bike riding down a busy street during rush hour, playing ball hockey on the roof of Jackson Square with her friends, and interrupting the flow of shoppers at Limeridge mall. While these ideas are not necessarily going to incite measurable change, they do have the power to change people's perspectives surrounding the notion that public spaces should be empty spaces or "no-man's lands." Everyone has a right to these spaces, or should have, and Chak charmingly illustrates this through her friendly attempts at activism. Further, Hamilton does in fact have a wealth of artistic talent, including a thriving music scene, arts exhibits, and small theatre, and all of these creative aspects contribute to the character of the city. However, Chak's logic near the end of the novella leaves something to be desired, as she describes her encounter with a woman she met at an art studio in the following way: "She taught me a lesson that

I'll never forget, about the difference between a dignified living through art and having an impoverished soul, and that the richness of our lives could be better measured by songs and poems than by our average household incomes" (82). This is a lovely sentiment, but it tends to align with the notion that "Art is the New Steel," which we know is not the case. Yes, art plays a vital role in community, however, it cannot sustain an economy, and sooner or later, our healthy souls must deal with overdue bills. Although Florida advocates for his "creative class" to take over the economic world while Chak sees the beauty in everyday creative expressions, both fail to offer a vision of Hamilton that is lasting and beneficial to the masses (although it does not have to be one way or another—we could use both of these models to inform our attitudes). Chak was not setting out to "change the city" though; rather, she set out to tell stories about a place so that she could try to understand its complexities, and the tensions that surfaced through her navigations illustrate a more realistic understanding of place than Florida's self-assured logic does.

Sarah Mann's "Creative Class Struggle" and Gentrification

In any discussion of Florida's "creative class" logic, it is important to consider the social justness of such a class-based economic plan. Sarah Mann is a local activist and community educator who works and lives in downtown Hamilton. She has written an article on this idealized "creative class" and how it is leading to the gentrification of spaces that sex workers and others working or living on the streets inhabit, as well as Hamilton's poorest residents (1). She

outlines the issue particularly as it pertains to the James Street North and

Landsdale neighbourhoods in downtown Hamilton, saying that these areas have

borne the brunt of the city's creative economic strategy (1). What is happening,

she says, is that developers are motivated to "re-create space for the incoming

creative class" and these developments are forcing out people living in poverty

who have long resided in these areas (1). James Street North in particular is an

area that has for several years now been identified as an up-and-coming,

rejuvenated space founded on the presumption that the arts are going to attract a

growing "creative class" into the downtown area. In order to make way for this

broad-scale, arts-based project, Mann says the city is subscribing to a "clean up"

the streets effort, which includes 24-hour surveillance, increased police presence,

and legal and illegal evictions from heritage buildings in an effort to clear space

for businesses and living spaces that cater to "young, hip consumers" (1).

One of the main tenets of her discussion is that, in public discussions of

Hamilton's rebuild, particularly in the media, this "cleansing of the downtown"

logic has been particularly intolerant of sex workers, squatters, and other

disadvantaged populations. The Landsdale neighbourhood, because of its poorer

residents and location on the outskirts of the James Street North art revolution,

has come under major scrutiny. Mann uses the term gentrification to discuss what

is happening in these neighbourhoods—and rightly so, as class divisions are

certainly determining the division and use of public space here. One of the major

issues (aside from the obvious physical displacement of people from their homes)

is that these "rebuild" projects neglect to consider the rich culture attached to these spaces. In effect, a whole community is being erased by these "cleansing" processes. Mann identifies the demographics affected by this process as follows: "In a city where class divisions between white and racialized groups, men and women, able and disabled persons and cisgendered and transgendered persons are magnified, the wealthier class that moves into a gentrified space is inevitably predominantly white, male, able and cisgendered" (2). What is more, those displaced are not being heard because they are "necessarily not around to be counted," and so it is important to understand how space and the discourses surrounding the use of space have changed in this process that caters to the wealthy (2).

Since art is a primary vehicle for the logic of gentrification (thank you Richard Florida), it is quite effective that Mann discusses two exhibits that were displayed in galleries on James Street North to strengthen her position. In 2009, Gary Santucci, owner of the gallery The Pearl Company, exhibited a slide show during a James Street Art Crawl entitled "The Hood, The Bad, and The Ugly" that displayed exploitative images of women doing sex work in the Landsdale neighbourhood (2). These images were mainly captured with video surveillance equipment on Pearl Company's roof as well as on Santucci's personal camera— and Santucci did not ask permission from these women to display these publically (3). In 2010, Larry Strung also exhibited exploitative photos of female sex workers in "A Child of God," an exhibit that appealed to faith and prayer as the

saviours for these women (and similar to Santucci, he did not get written permission from the women) (3). Mann's critique of these exhibits encompasses two major points: 1) these exhibits were prime examples of the colonizing, white male artist taking advantage of a female sex worker (not recognizing her work as a legitimate means of earning an income); and 2) these exhibits were displayed for people in the James Street North neighbourhood as a call to "clean up" the neighbouring Landsdale neighbourhood (3). These examples highlight an oppressive disregard for ethical rights that the "creative class" ideology, in cooperation with other variables such as religious and political leanings, can condone. Mann clarifies that sex workers need to have their rights acknowledged in public spaces, and that dispersing them throughout the city will only work to sever "their system of mutual support" (5).

Mann's article lends a crucial voice to the issues surrounding Florida's "creative class" logic, and encourages Hamiltonians to think critically about how these creative movements affect *every* citizen. While I do agree with Mann's public call to support sex trade workers and recognize their rights in city spaces, I do not think that her radical critique on the James Street North art scene is meant to be taken as a bible for the way to move forward (after all, some of the commenters on her article who claim to be from the Landsdale area would like the neighbourhood to be "cleaned up" insofar as they feel it is more safe for their children). She is simply calling attention to something that needed to be called attention to. What we choose to do with this information, (particularly what those

in power chose to do with this information), will determine Hamilton's future. A

potential downfall I see occurring even on James Street North is that the young,

hip people moving to the area are erasing much of the immigrant culture that has

defined this space for generations. But this dichotomous way of thinking tends to

take us right back to the kinds of "us" and "them" divisions that Florida favours in

his class manifesto. Instead, we should be asking whether it is possible to imagine

a space where cultures new and old can co-exist. How can we foster this

approach? Perhaps the city could start by letting Sarah Mann choose the speaker

for Hamilton's next Economic Summit.

Simon Orpana's The Art of Gentrification

Differing somewhat from Tings Chak's understanding of Hamilton city,

McMaster University PhD student Simon Orpana's 'zine *The Art of Gentrification*

is very much centered on the politics of art and urban space. He writes the 'zine

from a personal narrative stance, and locates the main character as an apartment-

dweller on James Street. The place the speaker lives in is described as being "cozy

and inexpensive," until movies begin to be filmed on the street and politicians

start canvassing door-to-door (1-2). At first, the narrator says he really loved the

Art Crawls on James Street, but soon he describes them as "an INVASION" (2).

The speaker is an artist himself though, and there is a tension between the

enjoyment of a culture that nurtures the arts, shown when he ponders "Hamilton

might exist in a black hole as far as the rest of the world was concerned, but for

artists it was turning into a little oasis," contrasted with this "invasion" mentality

for residents of that space (4). He then importantly reflects that perhaps he is the one who is invading the space; after all, he has only lived there for five years, whereas many residents have lived there for much longer (4). This reflection outlines the possibility, and indeed, the necessity of privileged artists to produce art that critiques privilege. Orpana's next drawing of Richard Florida is quite humourous, as he is depicted playing a video game console that reads "Gentrify!" as the spaceship Florida is presumably controlling called "The Creative Classes" blasts dollar signs into the buildings on James Street. This blasting signifies the inevitable raise in rent for people who have lived there for numerous years, contrasted with the young, "creative class" of artists moving into these spaces, who think the rent is cheap compared to Toronto.

Yet what can the narrator, as a potential agent in the gentrification process, do about his role in all of this? Orpana first provides a helpful historical context for understanding the current climate of gentrification, illustrating numerous civic protests and ideological formations such as Fordism and Neoliberalism in creative ways that make understanding gentrification accessible for lay people. It is this accessibility that makes his publication particularly useful as a teaching tool, as he gets to the heart of the matter mainly through images and speech bubbles. Ironically, he is using art to critique the "creative class" mentality, yet by using this mode of pedagogy he is able to stimulate discussion not only for those who may not otherwise want to dig into the vast historical forces that inform gentrification, but also for those very artists who are on the front lines of the

gentrifying army. This is particularly the case as he outlines the "creative class"

logic behind the concept of "authenticity," where often underpaid workers at cafés

and stores in areas like James Street justify their menial wages by valourizing

their artistic endeavours when they are "off the working clock," and this exploited

brand of authenticity gets "rented back to customers as ambiance" (14).

Furthermore, the commodification of "art" tends to erase the heterogeneous forms

of art and resistance in the city (for example, open mic nights surrender to

scheduled "performers," street artists are "cool" only insofar as they create art that

is available for consumption, etc.). Overall, the long-reaching arm of capitalism,

with its emphasis on individualism, competition, and temporary working and

living conditions soon defies any semblance of community and cohesiveness that

exists. And the scariest part to me is that those people in power, such as

politicians and developers, readily subscribe to this capitalistic ideology as they

plan Hamilton's future.

So what can be done? The narrator in Orpana's 'zine does make some

suggestions, such as the importance of emphasizing the need for low income and

mixed income housing (for single and multi-residents), as well as for a spirit of

inclusivity to be encouraged in communities so that people such as sex trade

workers and the homeless can be respected rather than displaced and/ or despised

(25). Ultimately, the 'zine encourages people to do something, anything, to

counteract the processes of gentrification that this "creative class" logic

underhandedly creates.

While a vibrant arts scene in any city is potentially a great thing because it encourages a spirit of creation and celebrates people's diverse and unique perspectives, overall, the "creative class" logic has been shown to be a destructive force that is severing Hamilton's downtown spaces as much as it is "revitalizing" them. By critiquing the "creative class" and showing how it is a central part of the gentrification that is happening in Hamilton's core downtown spaces, I hope to have provided a crucial component in any consideration of how to "rebuild" Hamilton in a "post"-industrial era. From an ideological standpoint, I think the most hopeful way forward would be to combat the ideas that are informing the current policies and development projects of city officials and private developers. This would involve consciously working to promote values that are opposite to the individualistic, competitive, transient values that a capitalistic, neoliberal vision of "urban development" entails. Indeed, because the city has bought into this whole notion of a "creative era," producing art that fosters togetherness, community, and an appreciation for Hamilton as a distinct and lived-in place is a good place to start.

Chapter 4: Evaluating the Regional Approach:
The Importance of Telling Stories About "Hamilton"

> "Story-telling is a cultural technology of
> connectivity and groundedness;
> stories are told in the flesh, on the ground, by a
> body in a specific place."
>
> ~Sylvia Bowerbank
> "Telling Stories About Places"

What is "urban" anyway? Or for that matter, what is "Hamilton"? So far, I have used the regional designation of Hamilton to discuss contemporary development projects, and focused on what tends to be a traditional image of the city or urban aspects of this place (such as the downtown "core"). Yet it is important to acknowledge that any analysis based on these designations does have the potential to be problematic. First, the term "urban" is often considered a designation that has an assumed understanding of space attached to it (i.e., it is a densely populated space, with high buildings and traffic and a diversity of cultures and people). Urban spaces are where the action is, in contrast to rural spaces where hay, horses, John Deere tractors, and country folk (aka white, overall-wearing men) carry out a quiet (or drama-filled, depending on who you talk to) existence. Of course, these are stereotypes that solidify the binary of urban/ rural, which connotes an inaccurate view of spatial geographies. I have tried to be cautious of these stereotypes as much as I could throughout my discussion of urban space by specifying street and area names wherever possible in order to locate *where* I mean by "city." However, I admittedly often found myself slipping

back into stereotypical ways of thinking about urbanity, particularly because I was analyzing so many works that are set in downtown core spaces. My purpose, then, in writing this final chapter is to grapple with this very real and potentially contentious issue of spatial stereotypes in order to come to some sort of consensus about how we might re-comprehend the perceived urban/ rural divide.

A second issue that I want to address in this chapter is the loss of a diverse sampling of literatures that potentially occurs when focusing on literary analyses based on stereotypical designations of "city" and "non-city." If I only focused on Hamilton as a city space like the popular representations of these spaces in the media are portrayed, my analysis would necessarily be limited because it would not take into account spaces such as kitchens in the home or gardens in backyards that are also part of "city" or downtown living. (And conversely, these spaces would then be relegated to the realm of the "rural," signifying further that "rural" means "non-city," whereas we know that there are factories and airports in the countryside as well). Therefore, in this chapter I want to first address the theoretical issues surrounding an analysis based on urban and regional criteria, and then offer a re-thinking of these boundaries by looking at two female Hamilton writers' works, Sylvia Bowerbank and Marilyn Gear Pilling. These writers emphasize forms of storytelling that cross perceived boundaries of "urban" and "rural," and open up new possibilities for understanding resilience within spatial realms.

To address the theoretical concerns surrounding constructions of urbanity (and non-urbanity), Edward Soja's understanding of "urban" helped to put my analysis of city spaces into perspective. He points to the necessity of recognizing the interconnectedness of three ways of conceptualizing "urban" in thinking about this designation: perceived, conceived, and lived spaces (12). The perceived approach sees city space as something that can be studied "as a set of materialized *spatial practices* [emphasis added] that work together to produce and reproduce the concrete forms and specific patternings of urbanism as a way of life" (10). The conceived approach sees city space as "more of a mental or ideational field, a conceived space of the imagination"; this perspective tends to be more concerned with "thoughts about space" rather than materialized actions (11). The third perspective attempts to incorporate both of the first two perspectives, by investigating the spatial specificity of urbanism as "fully lived space" which is "simultaneously real-and-imagined, actual-and-virtual, [a] locus of structured individual and collective experience and agency" (11). So, according to Soja, city space is experienced as objective, subjective, and both (and in-between) at once, and most important, we play an active role in producing and shaping space (Ivison and Edwards 5). As long as we understand the dynamics of space as such, we can foster the diverse and always fluctuating definition of "urban" that must necessarily accompany perceptions of city space (and likewise, we can reconfigure how we think of "rural" spaces as well). In theory, this makes sense. In practice, it became important in my discussion of Hamilton to include a variety

of understandings of what city means and how it is experienced, in order to speak to this multifaceted nature of urbanity, rurality, and everything combined of and in-between these designations.

What does "Hamilton" mean then? Throughout my thesis, I have discussed writers whose focus necessarily takes them to different physical and mental locations. James Deahl's Hamilton spans the Beasley neighbourhood to the factories on Burlington Street; Chris Pannell's includes Stonechurch Road on the mountain; John Terpstra travels to 19th century Locke Street in his imagination; and Tings Chak explores other peoples' stories as a measure of place from her point of view as a McMaster University student. All of these accounts are about Hamilton, and in their specificity they illustrate the nuanced reality of what this "Hamilton" designation is/ can be.

But even though I have shown how a multifaceted understanding of "urban" accommodates different narratives, analyzing literature through the lens of region (i.e., Hamilton) is not entirely without its challenges. Since the early 1900s, scholars have been conflicted on the value of conducting literary analyses on the basis of a regional approach. Much of this conflict has been because of the rise and fall of nationalist sentiment—the nation-state has often been a favoured measure of analysis, relegating the region to the periphery (Wyile et al. xii). Regionalism is also seen as too reductive, often under scrutiny for the tendency to be thought of as a terminal debate (Wyile et al. xi). If one writer represents a region one way, for example in Margaret Laurence's Manawaka series, will this

be the only way that people see that region? Will the diverse voices that inevitably experience this place in differing ways be drowned out by the representation of the one? When thought of in this way, it does seem that the constructed notion of "region" has a homogenizing effect on the area it is thought to represent (although the same could be said for the designation of "nation," yet it does tend to encompass a larger body of works because of the vast areas included in this categorization). This is certainly a danger I toyed with in focusing my analysis of local literature on its "Hamiltonness," rather than approaching each work for its own individual literary merits (although each work certainly has its own merits). However, my analysis is centered on place, and so I became satisfied with the understanding that for this particular project, focusing on Hamilton when analyzing local literary works was a necessary evil.

Regarding Canadian writing in general, though, "regionalism has been associated, often unfavourably, with provincialism, with a rural context, or with local-colour writing" (Wyile et al. xi). Indeed, the problem with regionalism seems to be that place is more often than not relegated to the constructed realm of the persistent, stereotypical "rural" in writing set in Canada. Regionalist approaches to city spaces could then be seen to contribute a positive development to Canadian literary theory, as Ivison and Edwards comment that "Canada is an urban country, yet this fact has often been elided from our public discourse, our national mythologies, and critical discussions about Canadian literature and culture" (6). But just what does it mean to be an "urban country?" This remains

unclear, and we find ourselves stepping right back into the stereotype-based reality that we started in. While according to Ivison and Edwards, regionalism has tended to misrepresent the reality of lived experiences in order to privilege a "rural" ideal that in contemporary times has lost its relevancy, I understand their approach as presenting a similar conundrum, where the terms of exclusion (rural/ urban) are simply switched.

However, regionalism's relevancy has once again surfaced, as over the last thirty years, economic, political and cultural developments have called for a renewed focus on regionalism, as Wyile et al. explain:

> Decentralization, regional consciousness, and a growing suspicion of institutional nationalism, combined with the development of a global economy and a more eclectic international culture, have undermined the cohesion of the nation-state. The rationalizing effects of a global market economy have put pressure on local economies and cultures, throwing increasing attention on culture and politics at the regional level, and forcing redefinition of the notion of community (Wyile et al. xii).

Indeed, in a postmodern and poststructuralist era of critical approaches to literature and culture, the recognizing of difference and the celebrating of diversity can effectively be explored within the context of local, urbanized-ruralized spaces. While the potential homogenizing problems of regionalist approaches remain, if these analyses are pursued within the context of critical theories that consider variables such as class, gender, race, and sexuality, "the resilience of region can be tested" (Wyile et al. xiii). In other words, regionalism, in light of current theoretical understandings, can be reconfigured in a way that celebrates diversity rather than quashes it, and can narrate "urban" and "rural"

spaces in cohesion as well as the spaces in the gap between these dichotomies. For example, Marjorie Pryse believes that regionalist writing by women and men who are not in a dominant position in society can employ strategies of resistance, because this position challenges the dominant culture by asking readers to identify with people outside the realm of the center (24). In fact, writing in this framework can be seen as "epistemic privilege" whereby "narrators and regional characters resist the dominant reading, muting its silencing effect and teach[ing] readers how to approach 'others' differently" (Pryse 25). As shown in previous chapters, we can get a glimpse into how power dynamics are at work by reading local, place-based stories in contrast with the capitalist, neoliberal narratives of "urban development" that politicians and developers with financial and social clout favour. As it turns out, local storytelling can be an effective means of giving voice to less- or under-privileged citizens and illuminating the rhetoric that those in power use to justify a region's social and economic policies. This can be particularly true within the context of a mid-sized city like Hamilton which arguably has more of a regional consciousness than a huge metropolis like Toronto, which can tend to focus more on its global and/ or national position.

By juxtaposing theoretical, rational approaches to city planning often favoured by those in power with poetic, narrative accounts of Hamiltonians' experiences of place, I hoped to showcase local voices in my "regionalist" case study approach to understanding Hamilton in relation to the neoliberal culture of resilience in the developed world. I believe, like the Canadian literary theorist

Alison Calder, that "[T]he impetus behind a lot of globalization or transnational studies is a desire to resist homogenizing forces. But by thinking in generalized rather than local or specific terms, this scholarship sabotages its own agenda" (Calder 1). Place is important, and by exploring ours as well as others' relationships to a specific place, we can better understand "what forces are acting on us, and how we might respond to them" from our locale (Calder 1). Importantly, Calder notes that "Places—regions or otherwise defined—are both porous and unique. A place is not stable; it is always in flux," and it is this flux that we must celebrate and bring to the fore of discussions about Hamilton in order to understand the needs of this place. The best approach to regional analyses then, to me, necessarily lies in an understanding of spaces as never static, as never just "urban" or "rural" (or "suburban," for that matter). By focusing on their neighbourhoods and everyday places, writers of Hamilton can explore all of these nuanced facets of their place, and claim a measure of power in the specificity of their surroundings: "We don't live generally, we live specifically, and in that specificity, I think, we may have power" (Calder 1).

In light of the previous theoretical discussion, I would like to look at two more works, written by women, which blur the lines between dichotomies such as urban/ rural, and man-made/ natural environments. It is through these innovative ways of looking at Hamilton as place that we can see a multifaceted resilience in regional forms of literature that takes into account varying configurations of what "region" could (and should) be.

Sylvia Bowerbank on Bioregionalism and Storytelling

Sylvia Bowerbank was a well-respected professor at McMaster University in the Department of English and Cultural Studies and in the Arts and Science Department. She developed a lifelong appreciation for nature in her early years, where she lived on Baptiste Lake. Bowerbank was also one of the founders of the Women's Studies program at McMaster University, and was a Co-Chair of the President's Committee on Indigenous Issues. She received many awards during her time at McMaster, and her scholarship is has been foundational in a number of fields (McMaster University Library, The William Ready Division, Archives and Research Collections, fonds description).

While up to this point Hamilton has been depicted by many writers as a region, demarcated by street names, historic landmarks, experiences, cultures and people, Bowerbank engages in a crucial discussion of the intermingling of our built environment and our "natural" one. Rather than recognizing national or city borders as the spatial categories which define our conceptions of place, Bowerbank suggests a bioregional approach which recognizes that physical and environmental features such as watersheds often span national and city borders. This way of reframing place encourages a relationship between people and environment, rather than a segregation of and/ or a protectionist approach to areas that are deemed "natural" from those that are more urban or lived-in by humans. This thinking is derived from Native ways of understanding nature that stress an

interdependent co-existence with our surroundings, rather than a neoliberal-minded "let's drain the natural resources in that place for profit" mentality.

A project initiated in the 1990s to clean up Hamilton's Bay Area called The Bay Ecowise Project inspired Bowerbank's reflection on place in 1997, when she found that although researchers had good intentions with this project, "priority is given implicitly to traditional natural science perspectives on rehabilitation of an ecosystem" (2). The stories of place by the people who have lived in this place for generations were missing from clean-up considerations. Indeed, this is a major problem with neoliberal forms of resilience thinking—by failing to recognize the heterogeneous make-up of places and people's interactions and understandings of place, development decisions are made largely without the input of those who have valuable, in-depth understandings of that place. Bowerbank calls "the story of ordinary people's relationships to ordinary places" something that is "a hidden and untapped resource for understanding the complicated, shifting connections between human behaviour and environment" (1). To me, this approach is quite compelling because inevitably the way we think about our relationship with our surroundings determines how we act within them. To know the feelings and knowledges that inform the motivations of people in their daily interactions with place (and in Bowerbank's case, with the natural environment), researchers will have an adequate way to configure more sustainable and cooperative solutions to spatial problems. Indeed, Bowerbank says, "[T]elling our stories about the past, as well as about the present, will help us to articulate our own region's historical

ecology…and…the ongoing dialectical relations between human acts and acts of

nature, made manifest in the landscape" (2). We need to understand place as

spaces that were and are inhabited by generations of people with various

backgrounds, experiences and values that contribute to what it is today (2).

Although stories have the capacity to discourage collaboration because no

one shares the exact same way of thinking about place, if we look at more of the

big picture we can see that, as Luc Ferry remarks, "The love of nature strikes me

as being composed of democratic passions shared by the immense majority of

individuals who wish to avoid a degradation in their quality of life…" (qtd in

Bowerbank 3). The same can be said for Hamilton spaces—the *love* of this place

and its natural and man-made components could be seen as the democratic

collaboration of the majority of people who do not want to see it crumble nor see

their quality of life as Hamilton residents diminish or deteriorate further. Part of

what causes the rift between interested parties, I think, is the limited ways we are

conditioned to think within our rational Western epistemology. Things are either

this or that, here or there, never able to intermingle or connect in tangible (or even

intangible) ways. Even in writing this, I have struggled constantly with the limits

that the English language imposes on any discussion that attempts to critique the

dominant, neoliberal understanding of resilience. Common words such as

"stakeholders" and "development" tend to capture a neoliberal management style

of spaces that does not represent the rich, heterogeneous make up of Hamilton as

place. Similarly, Bowerbank laments that although in intellectual circles it is

customary to understand "nature" and "ecology" as complex terms, "In our communities, we need to negotiate a shared, if shifting, understanding of what we mean by 'nature'"; we need research methods that respect people as sources and co-producers of "bioregional knowledge" (3).

There *are* drawbacks to using stories as knowledge in planning initiatives, as "[I]t is so easy for our words to reproduce, or to get co-opted into, the multinational project of management and mastery. Our stories often unwittingly personalize and animate prefab narrative patterns" (Bowerbank 3). These prefab patterns, such as a longing for an idyllic past, often cloak resistance efforts in the dominant ways of thinking that we are trying to be free from. But this does not mean that we should discount the power of storytelling or abandon it altogether; rather, we need to ask how we can reach a collective vision through the multiplicity of local narratives, instead of focusing on conflicting desires. Bowerbank suggests a few things we can do to get us on a better path: 1) "use innovative literary tools to critique suspect projects and to invent alternative solutions to local problems"; and 2) "not merely react to particular crises, but instead develop an ongoing process of meetings that allow people to cultivate a collective sense of place and participation in environmental decision making" (3). The overall idea, she says, is to "create effective rhetorical spaces…that legitimate, rather than discredit, the good stories of ordinary people as co-producers of environmentally sound knowledge and behaviour" (3). Story in this sense can be defined more as a "testimony" or "testimonial narrative" that

upholds life experience as evidence of the truth contained in the speaker's words (Bowerbank 3). People can bear witness to what is going on around them, and in turn, their voices will be included in policy decisions where they are now ignored. However, in order to prevent people from taking advantage of this forum and telling sensationalized accounts of their lived experiences, these stories must be told in what Bowerbank calls "legitimating public spaces" that would reinforce to the storyteller that they must narrate responsibly (e.g. spaces like City Hall) (4). The beauty of this mode of storytelling is that the stories are not just subjective, but they become "inter-subjective" because they engage the tellers and the listeners in a respectful dialectic (4). Indeed, it would be great for a city official like the mayor to host a collaborative storytelling event featuring local artists, writers, and residents that is centered on the theme of "Hamilton as place" and held in a public space off the beaten Art Crawl path.

Bowerbank's bioregional approach challenges divisions of space we often take for granted and welcomes ecological consideration into traditional "city" conceptions of space. Through this innovative way of thinking we can begin to brainstorm new ways of doing what Marjorie Pryse calls "writing out of the gap" between power structures. After all, it is advantageous for those in power to ignore or not see the human suffering their policies and projects create; stories provide insight into the effects of management ideas on environments, people, communities, and culture.

Marilyn Gear Pilling's Poetry

Marilyn Gear Pilling lives in Hamilton, but grew up in Huron County, an influence that is apparent in her poetry. She is the author of two works of fiction and several collections of poetry, was awarded the *Descant*'s Winston Collins "Best Canadian Poem" prize, and her works were included in the *Best Canadian Poetry Anthology* in 2009. She has also been shortlisted for several national awards, and her poetry has been broadcasted on CBC Radio (Black Moss Press).

In tune with Marjorie Pryse's theory, Marilyn Gear Pilling is a poet who writes out of the gap. In her poems she challenges confining definitions of urban and rural, as well as class and gender stereotypes, illustrating what Pryse says is one of the main subversive functions that regional literature can serve: "regionalist texts construct a critique of the subordinate positions created for, then occupied by, rural, elderly, poor, female, un- or unconventionally married, often untutored persons" (25). In Pilling's poem "At the Corner of James North and Vine," the speaker is identified as a female who is returning to her car from the Market. She stubs her toe and it begins to gush blood, but she remains calm and refuses to become impatient when the parking attendant is not in his booth (she needs her deposit back!). The reason for her patience and good-nature hinges on the fact that she has "a bag of peas in the pod / a bag with the heft of a good-sized dog" (10-11). In this city space, she pauses to enjoy the peas, explaining in detail how she strips the pods and eats them one by one, welcoming a slow, steady pace to an otherwise hurried situation. She nicely juxtaposes the bloody toe and the

pain with the remembrance of being a girl on a farm, and appreciates the blue sky in the present time, and the fact that it is the first of July. The parking attendant then returns, described as "grizzled," "ninety years old," "shriven," and not from Canada (22-23). He informs the speaker that he does not owe her the deposit money she is waiting for, because that day it costs five dollars to park for one hour. At this point, if I were the speaker I would most likely lose my patience, or at the very least, protest. But the speaker of the poem simply opens up her massive bag of peas to the man and he grabs a fistful of them. Then, they chat about her toe, the peas, and the man smiles "a grave smile" at her, described as follows: "On his lower gum a crowd / of teeth pile towards the centre, some sit on the shoulders / of the others, all press forward, lean out to see / this world, its bony hands both empty and full" (37-40).

There are a few remarkable things to take note of in terms of the way this poem works to critique subordinate positions. The first is the relationship between urban and rural elements in the poem: the speaker juxtaposes and intertwines them together to create a different picture of the city than any dichotomy would allow. For example, the blue skies and the peas are elements stereotypically confined to the rural, and yet they fittingly play predominant roles in a poem set on the corner of Hamilton's James Street North and Vine Street. The interaction between the speaker and the man is even more interesting, as the man tries to grab as many peas as his "bony hand" can hold and the description of his teeth suggests that perhaps he could use the nutrition. The poem's last line, "the world, its bony

hands both empty and full" highlights the class inequalities that are present not just between these people, but the city in general (40). Yet Pilling not only gives the man a voice, but uses the interaction between the female speaker and the man to create a human connection between these two unlikely conversants. As the speaker offers her peas—symbols of her childhood on the farm—to the man, and he responds by saying "In my country…there is / a saying: When a beautiful woman offers you vegetables, / do not fast," they are exchanging stories of places that have meant something to them (30-32). By meeting and connecting through storytelling in this city space, they exchange knowledges and create a new story for the place of James Street North and Vine Street through the poem. Pilling brings life to a space that would otherwise just be a parking lot, and a man who may be ignored.

Another one of Pilling's poems that manages stereotypical "urban" and "rural" divisions in more fluid, interchangeable ways is "The Farm Your Lover." In this poem dedicated to her father, the speaker describes how the farm, which is referred to as a female, "burst into your life with the force of a / green stem splitting cement / from below" (5-7). Recall that Tings Chak used a similar image of grass growing through concrete, to describe the social and cultural resilience of life in downtown Hamilton spaces. Pilling uses the same kind of image to discuss the influence of the farm in her father's life, and illuminates the sheer forcefulness of natural life to overcome adversity, or in this case, man-made cement (in contrast, for example, to the cement in Pannell's poems, which is arguably void of

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life, rather than overflowing with life). The farm is not a passive, subordinate

entity in this description, but rather, it is endowed with power. Furthermore, even

though the images that follow present the farm personified as a woman who

"came to you barefoot, through buttercups and feather grass" with "her hair a

tangle of bee hum" (10, 15), other descriptors are far less idyllic, such as "She

lasted your lifetime / destroyed your marriage, your health" (16-17). There are

also frenzied descriptions of movement in the poem, such as "All around you,

quick flitter of bird wing-- / the hum, the flick, the dart, the skimming, swarming

intensity" that describe a sort of frenzied relationship with this farm that is

certainly not slow-paced and picturesque (19-20). I do not think that Pilling

purposely juxtaposed images stereotypically associated with "rural" and "urban"

in this poem, but rather, I think these elements co-exist and are true indications of

the place that she writes about. The farm is at once the best and the worst

relationship that the speaker's father ever had, and Pilling's poem captures the

flux and nuances that necessarily occupy this relationship with place.

Furthermore, the father's relationship with place is described so intimately, so

personally, as a means of drawing the readers' attentions to the intricacies of the

places we call home and the multifaceted nature of home; for example, for the

speaker's father, home is his work, home is his lover, home is his mistress, home

is cement, home is grass—all within the location of the farm.

    The final poem by Pilling that I want to analyze in the context of its border

blurring functionality is "Pea Season," which tells the story of the speaker's final

days working in an office (presumably, she is getting ready to retire). While she sits in her office, she focuses her attention on the peas she has hidden in her lap, falling into a sort of trance as she cracks open the pods, and the process "takes on a rhythm I cannot break even when sated" (6). To the speaker, the peas represent "the core of spring" and although she is at work her mind is "already in the pasture" (27). There is a sense in the poem that the speaker takes delight in the memories she has of her surroundings as a child, even as she is sitting in her office chair. She intertwines the peas with the pens, in an effort to represent a vision of place that is real and meaningful to her, and necessarily captures the multi-dimensions of "urban" and "rural" living. These categories that are often used in the media to define places are shown to not be mutually exclusive, but co-exist in a space made alive through the intertwining of memory and time.

As shown, both Bowerbank and Pilling stress the importance between memory and place, and having a connection with place. Their work is not confined to the urban/ rural stereotypes that often abound in representations of place in the media, but instead plays with these understandings of place, providing alternate visions of reality. For Bowerbank, it is useful to understand the Hamilton Bay Area as a bioregion rather than as a mapped out city region that ignores the natural formations and interactions of geographical spaces. For Pilling, it is important to bring together her experiences of life on the farm with her present experiences working in an office and talking with a man on James and Vine streets in Hamilton, because these all come together to form her understanding of

place. Both writers advocate for storytelling as a mode that can capture these nuanced understandings of place in personal and effective ways.

Overall, a re-thinking of what is traditionally or stereotypically meant by "urban" would also importantly include the recognition that domestic spaces like gardens and kitchens are as much a part of city life as they are in the country. A conclusion to be drawn from this dilemma (and one I hope this chapter has begun to address) is that a re-thinking of regional borders becomes important as we set out to tell stories of Hamilton, and all other regions for that matter, to ensure that a more collective vision of place is told.

Concluding Thoughts

"I am attached to a piece of geography."

~John Terpstra
Falling Into Place

As shown, resilience, for all intents and purposes, is a highly complex
term that is susceptible to neoliberal logic and is often used by those in power as
rhetoric that legitimates their right to space. Yet by using a multidisciplinary
approach to the framing of resilience, I have been able to consider the complex
power relations that inherently underlie any representation of the concept. Is
"resilience" an effective concept for evaluating contemporary urban development
projects? If anything, it certainly provides the opportunity for critical discussion
and critique of projects that align with a neoliberal vision of progress. I also think
that in using it as a framework for analyzing literature on place, I became more
cognizant of the subtler and potentially positive manifestations of its basic notion
of "exhibiting strength in the face of adversity" and adapting positively to change.
Indeed, it was the literary moments such as John Terpstra's existential bonding
with buildings and Marilyn Gear Pilling's story-sharing with an old man on the
corner of James and Vine streets that represented what for me an ideal form of
resilience should look like. Sometimes it is easy to overlook the positive
connotations that a concept can mean when we get bogged down in theoretical
qualifications. I hope that this research will inspire discussions on how the
uplifting tenets of "resilience" can be made into more inclusive forms of rhetoric
and storytelling that can re-frame "urban development" projects in tangible ways.

To conclude, I turn to John Terpstra's aptly titled *Falling Into Place* to provide a bigger picture of Hamilton as place, and emphasize the importance of having an intimate relationship with the places we call home in order to rouse responsible actions in "rebuilding" initiatives. Throughout his meditation on place, Terpstra continually reinforces the fact that he is "attached" to Hamilton's landscape and history, to the people who live and have lived here, and the land formations and patterns that have evolved throughout the years. He develops an intimate, personal love for this place by learning about the stories of the landscape and people who were here before him (a method that I believe Sylvia Bowerbank would certainly condone). I found as I was reading Terpstra's account that I too started to feel more and more responsible for Hamilton as place, *my* home, and thought of the many paths and buildings that remind me of times I was with my family, friends, and on my own. Place shapes memory, memory shapes identity, identity is shaped by place. By working to understand a collective memory of Hamilton, Terpstra opens himself up to a broader vision of the place that he lives in, and consequently, he commits himself to caring and advocating for it:

> I am so pleased with this place, despite the hurt and history. This dwelling, where I feel myself both landed gentry and honoured guest. Where the landscape continually shifts, stirs, and reveals something inestimable to itself, lifts another stone from its Bar, relates the story, offers up another item to place on the shelf, and invites me to consider all that it has as my own…I *pledge* to return the favour" (231 emphasis added).

If more Hamiltonians conceptualized place in this multifaceted and personal way, neoliberal forms of resilience would have a hard time finding a place to stand.

Appendix A:
Paul Wilson and War Metaphors

Urban Development is War (and *Heritage Groups are Heroes*)

An op-ed that Paul Wilson wrote entitled "Join the War, Tear Down No More," addresses several of the many defeats that the Hamilton Heritage Committee has had in recent months in their attempts to save historical buildings in the city from demolition. The first line of the article reads, "The People's Heritage Army wants you" and the next sentence goes as follows: "In the war room this week, General Brian McHattie talks strategy" (1). Brian McHattie is a councillor for Ward 1 and a member of the Hamilton Heritage Committee, and the article outlines a plan, or, keeping in line with the war metaphors the article is structured around, "strategy" in order to preserve buildings that the Committee believes should be preserved. Clearly, the Heritage Committee perceives themselves to be at a disadvantage when it comes to having a say in Hamilton's downtown development. So much so, in fact, that they speak of "gathering the troops" and declaring that "this is a call to arms" against both the city (for their lack of protective measures to date) and the developers who want to demolish the buildings (1).

The tone of Wilson's message is clear: by using metaphors of war, he legitimates his stance on heritage preservation to readers; after all, the question of *why* we should preserve older buildings is never raised, but rather, it is just assumed that this is the "morally correct" response to developer's plans. He uses metaphor to call readers to action and encourage them to go on the offensive. His language choice exhibits an underlying concept of struggle under the thumb of oppression and aligns his plight with "the people" of Hamilton. The metaphors draw on the image of the archetypal hero, a veritable underdog (that average folks can all relate to) who must gather reinforcements and strategize in order to defeat the bigger, badder opponent. In this case, the concept behind the metaphors would be akin to an understanding that *Urban Development is War*—a loaded perspective that leaves little (if any) room for compromise. In the grander scheme of things, this concept branches off from the "argument is war" metaphor that we live by in our culture which structures the way we perceive and act in an argument or conflict of interest (even the fact that I used the term "*conflict* of interest" speaks to the prevalent nature of this conceptual structure) (Lakoff and Johnson 4). Heritage advocates are in opposition to the capitalistic sense of "urban development" growth which is often used by those in power to legitimate building projects; they instead align themselves with a less prevalent appeal to social ownership and civic agency in discussions of development.

(Excerpt taken from Harvey 5-7).

Appendix B:
Poster at Artword Artbar

(Photo taken by Rachel Harvey—apologies for the flash!)

Appendix C:
The "Creative Class" and the Contempt for Poverty

Above: This picture was being widely distributed on Facebook in March 2013 (n.p).

Below: This picture is from a blog I found online which critiqued a T-shirt that I saw at Metro
Clothing Store on King Street in June of 2013 (Goodchild, Hayley).

Note: Barton Street is located in the North End of Hamilton downtown, and connects to James
Street North. It is often associated with poverty, sex trade work, addiction, and homelessness.
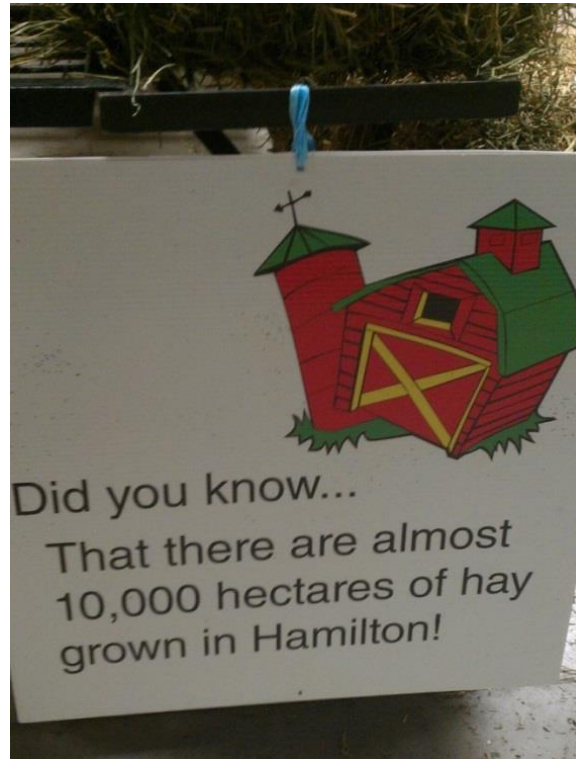
Appendix D:
Of Course There's Hay in Hamilton!

Photo taken by Rachel Harvey at the Ancaster Fair, September 2012

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